

With Every Breath I'm Drawing In

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With Every Breath I'm Drawing In

by [TheKingInGreene](#)

Summary

After fleeing the funeral home Daryl and Beth search for a safe place to finish her heat while navigating their changing relationship.

Chapter 1: I

And the people all come out to cheer
Rocks in the pathway break my skin
And there's honeysuckle on the faint breeze today
With every breath I'm drawing in
"Heretic Pride" by The Mountain Goats

It feels like waking up, but Beth doesn't think she was actually sleep. Awareness comes back to her in bits and pieces. It's dark out. Her shoulder is sore. Daryl is with her. They are still in the car with the white cross on the window. Moving along a tree lined rural street, it's paved and the headlights show a dividing line painted on the asphalt. Daryl must have took over driving at some point. She can hardly believe that neither of them is hurt, that neither of them is dead. She feels light headed, her chest is tight and her finger tips tingle.

"Well, I guess that went pretty well." She's thinking over everything that happened in the road and doesn't even realize she's broken the silence until her awkward high pitched voice is filling the car.

He lets out a breath so forcefully it sounds like he's been hit in the gut, his hands tighten on the wheel, face whips around to stare at her with wide eyes. "The fuck did ya just say?"

It takes a minute for her to catch up to what's going on. She blinks at him, taking in how tense and agitated he is, before she slowly answers.

"I think that went pretty well." She digs in, "All things considered."

"Ya think that was shit going right? What part of it? When they ambushed us?" He gropes around the center console for a second and pulls up a handful of zip ties, "What do ya think they had planned for a sweet little omega like ya?"

"Ya think that was everything going wrong?" She cuts him off before he can get going too much.

She figures he must have been stewing for a while, working himself up while she was dead to the world in the passenger seat. She wants to redirect him, but she's also unwilling to let him down play what they just managed to do.

"We were alone, no pack to protect us, middle of our first heat and they had us trapped. Now they are gone and we have everything that was theirs. I think it's safe to say we won that round."

He does not acknowledge that she spoke.

"We make a good team." Beth tries to make her voice soft, suggestive rather than challenging, wanting to ease this heavy unsettled feeling.

He only grunts in response.

"Ya can't deny it, Daryl."

His eyes cut to her and he raises an eyebrow in argument.

"Ya were amazing. I've never seen anything like that," she feels awestruck just thinking about how he moved, "those men didn't stand a chance."

He shakes his head, muttering, "Was dangerous. Must have been scary for ya."

"Nah, wasn't like that." Shaking her head, " Ya were so focused, and once they were done ya just stopped."

"I can't remember, everything just went red. At first, when I came back, I thought I hurt ya." His voice is raw, she thinks she understands a bit more about what's bothering him.

"I loaded ya into the car, ya just let me lead you around. Was nothing to be scared of."

"I didn't even help. There was so many walkers. Just left to fend for ya self."

"We each did our part." Beth reaches out squeezing his shoulder, "We made a good team. Balanced."

His eyes cut to her and he exhales loudly, "You're a persistent little thing ain't ya?"

"I think that's why ya like me so much." She feels her face stretching with a smile, "Ya have a soft spot for scrappy."

She can't help but grin as she teases him and some of the tension seems to evaporate. He's still on edge, but his attention is back on the road and everything seems more manageable. They are on a small two lane, trying to cut north up towards the mountains. It's slow going, having to make their way around wrecked cars and debris. The dashboard illuminates everything in a yellow green hue. It washes Daryl out, gives him a haunted appearance.

Beth wants to soothe and reassure him. After a few minutes she slides her hand across the console and rests it on his thigh. Her fingers stroking lightly back and forth while her thoughts spin. She understands why he is agitated, frightened. Fact of the matter is the longer they are together like this the more it will hurt when something does happen. His fondness for her makes her a liability. If this relationship continues she could very well be the thing that destroys Daryl Dixon. Knowing that changes nothing for Beth; everything in her screaming that the risk is worth the reward.

Beth isn't stupid, she knows Daryl is more than capable of surviving in this harsh world. He's built different than her, designed for survival, but she also knows that is not all he's meant for. There is more to him than just violence and destruction. He's a warrior and a guardian. He is also a sweet man who is clever and playful. He deserves to see something grow and flourish for once.

Beth might be a bit unclear on all the details, but she knows there are steps they could take to make them stronger and safer, more connected. Her hind brain purrs in approval at the thought. There is no filter between the thought crossing her mind and it tumbling out of her lips.

"I think ya should bond me."

Daryl slams on the breaks so suddenly that Beth's seatbelt locks and her head whips forward as the car screeches to a halt. His pheromones fill the car with overwhelm and anger. Beth can't bring herself to even say his name. Tears pooling in her eyes as her stomach flips with the absolute certainty she has just ruined everything.

She can hardly look at him. She's crossed a line she didn't know he had and it cannot possibly be undone. He's silent, face slack. She doesn't even see him move the door just slams shuts and he's gone.

There is no air left in the car. She's gasping but not drawing anything in. Her skin prickles and there is a rushing noise in her ears. What has she done? Why didn't she think before she opened her mouth? He's never said anything about bonding. Why would he want to tie himself to her? She's delusional, a heat crazed wacko.

Her door is wrenched open and she can't help but scream it startles her so badly. She calms slightly when she realizes it's Daryl, but her desperation ratchets back up as soon as she takes in the distress so plain on his face. She has to get out of this stupid car, to do whatever she can to fix this. She needs to show how sorry she is, to remind him of how much she needs him.

The inside of the car is thick with pheromones, making it impossible to think clearly. The battle haze only just drawn back, still lingering at the edge of his vision. Red flaring as he gets worked up, more and more certain they were planning on taking her. He wants to kill them again.

Even after she reassures him and tries to calm him, Daryl feels like he's drowning in emotions. He focuses on navigating the car past the hazards on the road, silently working on untangling the web of anger and fear inside him. When she asks him to bond her as casually as someone might ask for sweet tea at a cookout he has to make a choice to fight against his hind brain. He's flooded with unbearable want, but he's also deeply pissed that she would dare ask him something so important when she clearly hasn't thought about it.

He practically throws himself out of the car. Leaning against the cold metal he takes a few deep breaths, trying to calm the mess inside, then he just gives up. He stalks around the front of the car, intent on demanding an explanation of what the fuck is wrong with her. When he rips the door open she screams and then starts crying hysterically. Her hands are grabbing at the seat belt, as she gasps for air. He reaches over her, unbuckles the belt and then grabs Beth by the upper arms hauling her out of the car.

Small hands are grabbing at his shirt and jacket, her feet scrambling to find purchase as he drags her across the road. She's trying to talk, voice barely above a whisper, frantic apologies falling from her lips over and over. Daryl can't bring himself to feel bad for the way he's manhandling her, even when she reeks of submission.

"Be quiet." It's more of a growl than real words.

He backs her into a broad tree on the edge of the road. She's still apologizing, stumbling over her words. Red faced and smelling so sweet, eager to please and wanting with a hint of fear.

"Shut up." Why won't she just listen to him?

Everything inside himself screaming at him to just take control for once. So of course she says the last fucking thing he needs to hear.

"Please, Daryl, I need ya."

"Just fucking be quiet." He grounds the words out, dropping his forehead to press against her collar bone.

He uses both hands to rip open her pants. He pushes them and her panties down to her knees with a rough yank. Somehow, this makes her beg more.

"Please... please, Daryl... I want...please." A breathy, stream of gibberish.

He sinks his fingers into her heat. Forcing a gush of slick and a loud groan out of her.

"Shut up," He mutters as he slaps his palm over her mouth, "just shut the fuck up." Absolutely sure he'll blow his knot if she keeps on like that.

The rough breaths from her nose ghost over the back of his hand. Her hips rolling against him as he adds a third finger, stretching her tightly. Her hands are yanking at his belt buckle. Frantic. It takes a minute, and the whole time she's struggling with his pants she's clenching on his hand like she's trying to keep it. Finally, she gets his pants open and he has to squeeze his eyes closed against the rush of sensation when she palms his rock hard cock.

He pulls his fingers out of her cunt, trailing down her thigh to grasp at her knee and shove it up and out to the side. She stumbles, off balance and he bends his knees and thrusts up into her. He slides in easily, she's soaked.

He's still covering her mouth. Still telling her to be quiet over and over as he thrusts into her. Pinning her to the tree with the bulk of his chest. Only one of her feet is on the ground, boot sliding around unable to find grip in the dirt. Their flannels rubbing together, the zipper from his vest biting into her tits. It's the first time he's fucked her without them both being naked. Even through his agitation he misses the feeling of her skin pressed against his own.

His hips burn with the shallow, upwards strokes but he can't adjust because of how their legs are tangled in their pants. She's still grinding against him. After a few minutes, as the snap of his hips moves from frantic to longer slower deeper thrusts, he stops chanting a demand for silence and switches to a soothing shushing sound. The noise has an immediate impact with

Beth going almost limp in his arms. Everything in her hips and pelvis releasing and allowing him deeper.

She's whining the noise pushing past his palm. It turns to little yelps as he starts bottoming out with each of his thrusts. Absolutely bashing the head of this cock into her cervix. Her hands scramble around his shoulders, pushing under his shirts to rub at his skin. He can't hold back and she hasn't cum, but as soon as his knot starts to inflate he feels her convulsing around him. Her muscles pulling him into her lock as she wraps her arms and legs around him tightly.

There is no way to describe the sound she makes except to say she wails. If he couldn't feel what her cunt was doing he would think she was wounded. It's high pitched, hysterical. Her whole body seems to tighten, going rigid against him before collapsing completely.

He's locked into her, sagging against the tree. There is a dull thud as he drops to his knees, Beth bouncing in his lap. It feels like every inch of him is sticky and damp. There is a mix of sweat, blood and slick soaked into everything he's wearing. He's hanging his head feeling wrung out, as if all the red hot emotion poured out through his dick leaving a residue of shame and embarrassment coating him.

It takes a minute but he finally works up the balls to look at her. The whites of her eyes are red, the skin around them puffy. Her fingers rub softly at the raw, red skin around her mouth.

A pink tongue pokes out and licks her lips, and she holds his gaze for a few seconds before she speaks, "Ya still angry?"

"Nah." He pauses and makes a frustrated sound, "Fucking embarrassed. Ya don't deserve that shit. I wasn't even mad, not really. Not at ya... Just feel like I'm right on the fucking edge. I'm trying so hard to control myself. To do what's best for ya and not fuck this up."

"I thought ya were gonna..." She tucks her head exposing her neck, "Ya know?"

A frustrated groan slips out, then he takes a deep breath and tries to explain, "Ya can't just say that shit like it's the simplest thing in the world."

"Why can't it be that simple? It feels right." It kills him how earnest she sounds.

"What kind of life can I give ya? We are barely getting by. Don't ya deserve more than that?" His voice sounds brittle and his guts are churning, the taste of bile stinging the back of his throat.

"Daryl, that is every life. That's the whole dang thing. Ya live as well as ya can for as long as ya can. That's living. And if we are real lucky we get to do it with someone we care for."

She holds her hand against his face and pleads with him in a quiet voice, "Daryl, I want to always be tied to ya. I think we belong together.... "

He can't bring himself to look at her, instead he's looking down at where his fingers are fidgeting with the edge of her shirt.

"Daryl..." She presses at his chin with her delicate fingers forcing his eyes up to meet hers, "I know what I want. What do you want?"

"It ain't that I don't want to. Of course I wanna. But is it right? Ya was never meant for someone like me. If the world hasn't turned to shit an O like ya would have never given me the time of day. Shit, when would we have even been in the same room, Girl, we're from different worlds." He sounds far away and tinny to his own ears.

Beth pushes against his shoulders as she launches into a rant, "Ugh-nah Daryl life doesn't work like that. If the dead didn't ever start walking than I wouldn't ever be this Beth Greene. Don't matter how things might have happened. This is our world. This, right here, is how it freaking happened!

Ya told me to listen to this force inside me, that I know what I want and need. Well, it's telling me that ya are supposed to be a part of my life, I need ya and I think ya need me too. So, I'm gonna hold onto ya and everything in me says this is best way to do that."

Daryl can't stop the tears. She's saying these things, looking right into his eyes, into him, laying her cards on the table. He pushes his face into her neck. Hiding and working to keep himself under control, pushing his big emotions back down.

After a minute he pulls back finding her gaze, "If that's really what ya want ask me again when you're over this. Sober and in your right mind. Can't ask that when you're burning up with it"

She actually rolls her eyes, "Ya worry an awful lot about consent for an alpha."

"Ain't no joke, Beth. It's not something that can be undone. Ya gotta think it over for real, Girl. This is your whole life."

"Yours too." She counters.

He huffs. She strokes the side of his face, studying him for a minute before she relents.

"Ok, I understand what you're saying. I'll ask again when this is done."

She leans into his chest, letting her fingers rub over the worn flannel. After a few minutes the swelling goes down and he's able to help her awkwardly crawl out of his lap. They manage to get back into the car without further incident.

Heading north they eventually see a Bureau of Land Management sign for the Cohutta Wilderness around the same time the sky starts to change from black to purple. They turn onto a rough gravel track. After years of neglect it's barely a road anymore. Beth presses her forehead against the window as she watches the mountain looming over them in the pre dawn light.

Chapter 2: II

Chapter Notes

There is a scene near the end of this chapter that has dubious consent. Please let me know if you need any more details before reading.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Daryl thinks there is a logging trail that could take them closer, but it's not worth risking without a more rugged vehicle. Instead they head for a small, fenced on three sides, mostly over grown area with a sign that reads "Lake Conasauga picnic and day use parking area". There are no other cars and no sign anyone has been here in years. Just beyond the fence there are two small shade pavilions each with a picnic table and garbage can. A rough trail leads about twenty yards from the tables to a small hut that houses a pit toilet. Another trail leads from an information plaque at the edge of the parking lot off into the trees.

Their gear is spread out around the parking area. The trunk is popped open with their supplies laid out on the ground. There was a surprising amount of stuff in the car. Daryl found some cans of food, a gallon of water, a flare gun and 4 flares, a pair of binoculars, three hand guns and one shotgun, a few boxes of ammo, four sleeping bags, a tube of toothpaste, a stick of deodorant and 2 duffle bags with Atlanta PD logos, all stashed in the trunk and under the seats.

They have also taken everything out of their packs. It all gets combined and split between the now 4 bags. Each bag will be overstuffed, but he makes sure 2 are more manageable for Beth. Daryl leaves 1 hand gun a box of bullets, 2 small water bottles and a pack of granola bars hidden away in the spare tire well under the trunk.

Daryl doesn't want to start walking until it's light. They don't need any injuries that could be avoided by being able to see where they are stepping. It's still mostly dark, so they have some time to waste. He knows she's going to have to go without relieving her heat for several hours. He really hopes they can hold out, although he's not entirely convinced that getting ambushed while fucking on a mountain trail isn't the best possible way to leave this world.

After thinking it over Daryl decides to throw a quick knot into her to hold them both over. It's really the responsible thing to do. It will help them concentrate when they are traveling and this is the safest spot for it. On top of all those reasons, he just wants to be close to her again. To know he hasn't totally fucked everything up. That his hollering and dragging her around haven't made her change her mind about him.

She still seems a bit out of it, eyes glazed and movements clumsy. She's organizing the bags against the side of the car and startles when he runs his palms along her shoulders. He only

has to run his thumbs over the base of her neck a few times before she drops what she's holding and relaxes into him.

One hand drops to rub at her hips and waist. The other keeps pressing into the stiff muscles of her shoulders while he sucks and kisses at her ear and neck.

He drops to his knees. Removes her boots and then pulls off her jeans and panties. Then he pulls her up against his chest and kisses her deeply before backing over to the open car door. She chases his lips, pressing herself against him. She's so close he can barely open his jeans and eventually he gives up and just pushes them down far enough to free his cock.

He sits with his legs sprawling out the open door and tugs her into his lap. He's checking out all the windows, trying to keep a good watch. She rocking in this lap, slowly sinking onto him, looking entirely too pleased with herself. At first he's surprised he's even staying hard he's so preoccupied with staying alert. Logically he knows no one is about to pop out of the trees and take her. Emotionally he's terrified that she's just going to disappear.

She's bouncing in his lap, it feels great but he's certain he's about to be pushing rope unable to get a knot up while he's focused on keeping guard. She pulls at her t-shirt, pulling it up so her bare tits are bouncing in his face. He can't help but lean in, sucking and biting at her chest while his arms pull her pelvis down against his own. Then she cums on his dick and he's just totally lost. Her entire body clenches, her movements stop. Just tight and almost convulsing in his lap. He stops thinking and fucks up into her hard.

She has to grab onto the door frame and he keeps thrusting while shoving a hand between them to rub at her clit. It only takes a minute with him hammering into her and then she's clutching and cumming all over him again. The grunt he produces is feral as he blows a fat aching knot that steals his breath and pulls her down as far onto him as possible.

After a second he looks out at the road and the trees again. Then he breathes her in, rubbing his face on her tits and burying his nose in the warm skin between them for as minute before looking back to the road. She's folded into him, her arms wrapped around his neck. They stay pressed together breathing in sync and but not saying a word. When his knot eases he lifts her out of his lap and stands her up.

"Figured we should scratch that itch while we still have some shelter." Daryl says sheepishly, as he's climbing out of the backseat.

"Ain't ya responsible." If he had to guess he'd say it was as good sign that she's being sassy.

"Shouldn't be fucking ya outside at all, but I can't get enough of ya." He doesn't even know how he gets the words out, but he wants her to know. Then he immediately feels exposed and follows it with a crude comment to compensate. "Ya pussy feels spectacular but I ain't risking dying on the trail cuz we're acting like horny teenagers."

"Whatever you say Mr. Dixon." She raises an eye brow and he can't help but feel it's in challenge.

She's absolutely going to be the death of him. But what a way to go.

They only have to walk for about twenty minutes when the trail brings them along side a beautiful lake. They take a few minutes to wash up, Daryl strips down and plunges into the cool water. He scrubs at his chest, face and hair while Beth is supposed to be keeping eyes on the surrounding forest. In reality she's watching him moving in the morning sunshine. Appreciating the way the water slides and drips off his form.

On top of being a lousy look out she feels like she's invading his privacy. Like maybe, after everything that happened last night, he wouldn't be ok with her pervy leering. The thought doesn't stop her, just makes a deep pit in her stomach that wars with the tingling warmth in her pelvis and nipples. All serving as a clear reminder that she is pathetic and has no control over herself what so ever.

Daryl washes his shirt and pants, not that he's able to make much impact on the horrific stains. He pulls out a pair of grubby khakis and a thread bare tee shirt and then hangs the wet ones from a pack so they can dry. Afterwards he comes over and herds her towards the water. He pulls off her pants again, stripping her from the waist down and uses a rag soaked in the cold water to clean the sticky mess from her thighs. His touch is light, every movement incredibly gentle and soft. He gets her redressed quickly and he doesn't linger, but then, once he's loaded her up with a duffle across her chest and back pack over her shoulders, he grabs at her bum giving it a firm squeeze before pushing her ahead of him up the overgrown trail skirting the lake shore. She doesn't know what to think.

Views across the lake are beautiful, the sunrise reflecting off the water. The trail leads them through a forest of fern and hemlock, and up over several small rises. It's slow going, Beth struggling to keep her balance under the weight of the load, especially on the inclines where the trail is mostly loose rocks. She's easily distracted finding herself zoned out staring at the clouds, or the plants or even her own hands when she should be watching the path. Daryl hovers close behind, catching her multiple times when she stumbles. Holding her elbow and keeping her steady over the roughest sections.

It takes close to two hours for them to cover the mile of trail and arrive at the bog nestled in the valley at the base of the mountain. Everything is green and lush. It's almost loud with the sound of animals; crickets and frogs, the rustle of rodents, and multiple birds. Beth is thinking that might be a good thing, a sign that there is no walkers around when a loud crack has her freezing. Assuming it's a gun shot she stays completely still, crouched down until Daryl points out the beaver. It's watching them as it floats in the water pooling below a massive haphazard pile of branches that block the creek. It slaps his tail once more against the water in warning before swimming away.

The route veers right just past the beaver dam, meeting with another trail that emerges from the forest. At this point they stop to rest. Daryl takes her bags and sets them on the ground. Beth leans against a tree, feeling completely worn out. After rifling through one of the packs he hands her a bottle of water and some fruit leather. When he's close she kisses him and they seem to melt together.

He pushes her shirt up and she is happy there was no time to put a bra on when they ran from the funeral home. He's sucking and biting at her breasts while they rub vigorously against

one another. The firm muscle of his thigh wedged between her own provides the friction she craves. The warmth and pressure in her pelvis building until it forces a strangled moan past her lips. Daryl freezes, his forehead drops to her shoulder and he sucks in a few shuddering breaths.

Then he's pulling away, straightening his clothes and reaching into his pants adjusting his hard on. Her pulls her shirt back down and offers her the bottle of water again.

"Ya should finish that before we get going." She's swears he's avoiding her gaze.

A few minutes later they are back on their way. Beth stomps ahead for the next fifteen minutes or so. An anger bubbling in her. He doesn't want her, after last night he's pulling away. Why else would he stop when her nipple had been in this mouth? Is the thought of bonding her so repulsive? Or does he just understand now that she's useless and bound to die sooner rather than later? Fear and anger propel her and she moves more and more quickly. She is aware of his concerned face and the way he seems to almost hover over her shoulder and it all feeds her irritation.

Then they hit the first truly steep incline. Daryl tries to steady her and she shrugs him off. Everything seems to happen at once. It starts to rain, an absolute down pour, soaking them both and turning the path into a small creek almost instantly. Beth's slips, losing her footing, and is face down on the rocky, muddy path before she even thinks to try and break her fall.

Daryl is there hauling her up almost instantly. Looking over the scratches and shallow cuts on her hands and face. Asking if she's ok. The look of concern on his face is too much for her and she starts to sob. She's so warm, her head hurts, her skin is tight and itchy, her stupid boots are too heavy, and everything is just so much.

When they started hiking Beth kept reminding herself he told her to ask again, that it seemed like he still wanted her. Now after hours of trying so hard to move quickly and not hold him back she is in rough shape. Feeling off balance and unsure after no sleep and fleeing her nest. She doesn't want Daryl to know how badly she's struggling. Afraid of what he would think, that she's not good enough to be his omega. She keeps coming back to the fact that she asked and he wouldn't bond her. He was so angry with her. She disappointed him. Why would he want to be her alpha when she's like this?

They are going at it, dry humping like teenagers at bible camp when he realizes how careless he's being. He's got her nipple in his mouth sucking it into a beautiful little point while she's riding his thigh when she moans. It's the most amazing, sexy noise and it goes straight to his cock. For some reason it is also the sound that snaps him back to reality.

A few deep breaths and he's able to push back against his hind brain. Stomping down the desire and need as fiercely as he can. Once he's back from her a few feet he's able to take her in more objectively. Skin damp with sweat and cheeks bright red she looks disheveled and feverish. After some gentle coaxing he's able to get her guzzling down some water and then they're loading up and heading out.

Twisted, gnarly branches frame the sides of the trail, which seems to get steep almost instantly. Her pheromones shout of fear and anxiety and she seems irritated, but she's moving more quickly than she has all day. Heavy footsteps up the rough trail leaving cascade of loose stones in her wake. Following closely Daryl tries to balance his load of bags and weapons and keep her steady and stable as they start to trek upwards.

Not five minutes later the skies open and start absolutely pissing on them. The trail floods and they are soaked through in minutes. Then she seems to just collapse face first into the ground. He's right behind her and still not quick enough to catch her. Once she's sitting he inspects her hands and face finding some road rash but nothing too severe.

"Ya ok Sweetheart?"

He can't find any visible injuries but she won't look at him and he's getting scared. Finger nails scratch furiously along her forearms and he is about to reach a hand out to stop her when she crumples and starts to cry. It's impossible to tell the rain from her tears but she looks devastated.

When he asks her what's wrong she dissolves into hiccupping sobs. Daryl keeps trying to talk to her but it becomes clear pretty quickly that she's in no state to discuss anything. He makes the difficult decision to keep moving, he wants to throw off his bags and bundle her up in his arms to ensure she's content and happy, but he knows what they need is shelter. So he drags her upright, his arm wrapped tightly around her shoulders and they stagger on.

After an hour and a half and 3/4 a mile that feels straight vertical with no break in the rain she starts to shiver. Her skin is hot to the touch and flushed even when she's shaking with chills. He urges her on and she somehow manages to keep moving her feet. The whole time scratching at her skin and biting her nails until she is red and raw.

They wind through leafy brush and green ferns. Slogging up the muddy, rock and root strewn trail bed Daryl feels exhaustion deep in his bones. Two nights of little to no sleep, and the strain of a brutal fight taking their toll. On top of being so tired, she keeps trying to touch him. Fingers brushing against his neck, along his side, and against his hand where it's clamped around her shoulder. Daryl, knowing it's too dangerous to get caught up in that again, pushes against all his instincts and brushes her off again and again.

Aside from the occasional sob or gasping breath she has been silent since they started moving again. When she starts speaking suddenly it's quiet, almost a whisper.

"Daddy thinks the rain will hold off and we'll be able to clear the last two sections. Shawn doesn't wanna spend any more time in that combine but we need to get it done. We all got jobs to do"

It takes him a while to understand what she's saying, even longer to realize it's the incoherent rambling of her fever dreams.

"Turn it up I love Geronimo Jackson!" The words slur together, her eyes rolling around unable to focus.

The fact that she's still upright and moving is a miracle. It's like she's not actually here on the mountain with him at all. Wherever her mind is it's bouncing around. Dragging her from one vision to the next.

"She's teething, poor kiddo, feels terrible and can't sleep. Which means neither of us sleeps. Ughhhh. I love her, but this sucks."

"Ya gotta keep walking, Sweetheart." He speaks quietly, swallowing past the lump that forms in his throat at the thought of Judith, his lips pressed against the shell of her ear.

She sucks in a ragged breath, straightening slightly. Still leaning into his side, but a little less heavily. They lurch on. It keeps raining.

"I get it now." It kills him how fucking sad she sounds, but he keeps going, half carrying her half dragging her along.

Eventually the trail reaches a logging track, they cut right on the gravel, finally breaking through the trees at the top of a ridge line. When he sees the weathered steel of the outlook tower a wave of relief rushes through him. It gives him the energy to push forward and cover the final distance to the base of the stairs through wildflowers and grasses that have been pushed down by the heavy rain.

Daryl peels the bags off of Beth and then helps her sit, leaning her back against a metal support. He adds his two bags to the pile. He wants to go and ensure the tower is as empty as it looks before he brings her up. However, when he thinks about climbing those stairs and leaving her slumped on the ground alone he finds he physically cannot do it. Instead he lifts her into his arms, leaving the bags and crossbow for another trip, and slowly carries her up the metal stairs.

Her head is hanging limply over his arm. He tries calling her name but she doesn't respond. The stairs curve around the tower, each flight stopping at a large platform with impressive views of the sprawling mountain forest. At the top there is a wide walkway surrounding what looks like a small cabin with mostly glass walls. There is a cupboard with a small sink along one wall, a desk stacked with maps on another. In the center there is a small wood burning stove, in front of it a comfy looking arm chair and in one corner a double bed raised off the floor on a wooden platform. No sign of living or undead. Dust thick on every surface, it swirls in the air currents when Daryl pulls the door open.

Once she is laid out on the bed he tries to wake her. Beth rolls her head and her eyes flutter but she does not regain consciousness. She is not hot anymore. Her teeth chatter, lips dark almost blue, wet clothes stuck to her pale skin and soak into the bed. He can't smell her, like all her pheromones have been washed away. He doesn't know what to do. She's supposed to tell him what to do.

He tries to be gentle as he strips her, but she doesn't move, even when he's yanking on her jeans trying to pull the soaked denim off. Once she's naked, lying curled on her side in the middle of the bed he shakes the dust out of the quilt at the foot of the bed and covers her. His clothes come off much easier and he slips under the blanket, pulling her against him rubbing at her clammy skin.

The temperature in the little makeshift nest starts to rise. He can smell her heat pheromones again, but they are weak and flat.

"Beth, ya need to wake up, Sweetheart."

She grumbles and shifts, it's more of a reaction but it's not enough. He can't do this without her.

"Girl, ya gotta tell me what ya need." He feels desperate, he got her here, she's supposed to tell him what to do next.

Daryl's not stupid, he's heard about heat sickness. Seen a documentary one time when Merle had been away for robbery and he was working and actually had cable for a few months. So he knows it's bad, like physically damaging bad, for an omega to resist a heat. Knows that stopping in the middle of an established heat can be catastrophic. He keeps thinking of the one alpha who had a heart attack and died in the middle of a heat, his omega left with brain damage and organ failure even after medical interventions. It's too much. He's so terrified he's going to do something she won't want that he's frozen. She needs him, but this is too much.

Just like in the street in front of the funeral home he doesn't make the choice. One second he's absolutely distraught over what to do, the next he's a passenger as his hind brain takes control again. Unlike in the street in front of the funeral home his touch is gentle and precise his emotions steady. Not rage or anger rising in him, but a need and desire that is substantial and constant.

He pushes her onto her back. She still doesn't wake. He rubs at her chest and shoulders, touching the scent glands in his wrists to her skin everywhere he can. She's getting warmer and warmer, her scent stronger and sweeter. Pulling at her hips and pushing her legs apart he settles on his knees between them. Hanging between his legs his cock is so heavy and hard it seems to be reaching out for her.

He watches as his fingers spread her open. Calls her name again, while exposing wet, soft flesh. She moans when his fingers rub and push against her, but her eyes stay closed. Instinct keeps driving, pushing him forward into her with small firm strokes until her passage is wet and relaxed and his cock can sink into her over and over with no resistance.

Her body is reacting, moaning and clenching. Her head moving from side to side when her eyes slowly blink open.

"You're still here? Ya didn't leave me." Her words are slurred together.

"Ahhh, Beth." His voice is strangled, he wants to tell her he'll never leave but can't force the words out.

Hips jerking forcefully, he cums hard. Hands grabbing at her ass so he can press as deep as possible into her. His knot stretching and filling the space that opens inside her. She's dazed and he's locked inside her.

They are both asleep before his knot goes down. They are on their sides, legs tangled together quilt pulled over them. When Daryl wakes the sun is just starting to lighten the sky. They are still entwined under the old quilt having slept the entire night without waking or moving. Beth's skin is warm and her pheromones smell strongly of heat.

"Hey, I missed ya." She sounds sleepy, like she might not really be awake.

"Girl, I missed ya more." His voice is rough with sleep but his words are tender.

Chapter End Notes

The Geronimo Jackson line is a LOST reference.

Chapter 3: III

The thing about sharing a heat is that every time he thinks he's had the most obscene, dirty sex he'll have in his life they fuck again, and again. Each encounter somehow more primal and raw than the last. He wants to do things with her and to her that he's never even thought about before.

Their second day at the tower Beth is much better, coherent and alert when awake. At the same time, her rest periods have become deeper and longer, and knotting is becoming even more intense and consuming. His hindbrain getting louder and louder about how exactly he should be taking care of her. That's how he ends up buck naked, kneeling on the rough wooden floor eating her from behind.

She'd been at the window, hip popped out, face right against the glass admiring the view. That low voice in the back of his head had urged him up of the bed and forward until he was pressed up behind her sniffing at her tangled hair, then down behind her ear to the scent glad in her neck. She moans and arches back into him, eager as always. He drops to his knees, nose bumping along her spine and into her ass crack.

His large hands urge her knee out to the side and up onto the low shelf under the window. Her hips tilt back, perky little tits pressed tight against the glass. The change in posture opens her further allowing him to bury his face in her cunt.

After a few minutes of him licking and sucking at her flesh he works his fingers into her. Pressing against her front wall with his fingertips, searching for that rough bumpy spot that will help push her over the edge. His thumb presses into the side of her clit and his tongue finds her ass. He licks back and forth over the tight ring of muscle and she pushes back into him. She's loud, a stream of mumbled half formed words falling from her. She's only quiet when she clenches tightly and cums against him. Slick and drool are running down his face and neck, plastering his chest hair to his skin.

He keeps going. Happy to stay just like this until either his knees or knot protest. He's not paying attention to what she's actually saying until he hears her curse.

Leaning back on his heels he asks, "What was that, Sweetheart?"

"Will ya?" Beth whines.

"Hmmm? What do ya need?" His fingers are still pumping in and out of her and it's proving to be a distracting sight.

"Ya know, like this..."

"Hmm," he's mesmerized by the way her pussy looks with his fingers stretching it open.

Now his hindbrain is telling him to fuck her and all of his conscious thoughts are loudly agreeing. Pushing up from the floor with a groan he spins her around and pulls her against his

chest.

"Daryl!"

He's lifting her up, his cock bumping against her soaked opening. Beth pushes against his chest and whines. Daryl freezes, confused.

"Please!" It's a plea, desperation clear in her tone and smell.

"What do ya need?"

"Ugh, I want ya behind me." If her face wasn't so close to his own he might not hear, her voice is that quiet.

"What?" He's staring down watching his cock as he rubs it back and forth between her labia.

"Please can we? From behind?"

He peers at her, trying to understand, "Girl, what are you asking me?"

He's watching her face closely, doesn't miss the way she blushes deeply before she manages to force the words out.

"Fuck me from behind." She takes a deep shuddering breath then adds, "Please."

Even that God forsaken word isn't enough to sway him.

"Nah, Sweetheart. Can't do that." There is no helping the smirk that pulls at his lips.

"What?" She sounds outraged, distraught even.

"I'm saving that for a special occasion." The suggestive way he nips at her neck makes it feel like a promise, "But ya can't even imagine how much I like hearing ya ask."

She moans his name, hands pulling at his shaggy hair. He can't help but feeling pretty pleased with himself. Palming her ass he pulls her up and she wraps her legs around him finally allowing his aching cock to slide into her sopping pussy. He supports her weight and staggers across the floor until he can drop her onto the desk top, somehow managing to keep tucked inside her the whole time.

Beth grinds against him while he pumps into her and sucks ravenously at her tits. He's biting as much as sucking, leaving bruises and marks and trails of the slick he's coated in, all over her chest. He is completely caught off guard when she leans forward and sucks at the gland in his neck. That's something she's never done before.

Daryl's reaction is unconscious and instant, his knot inflating and pushing into her lock. His vision whites out, and every muscle in his body tenses and then releases deeply. By the time his brain reboots they are both panting, foreheads pressed together. When she has her breathing more under control she leans back, watching her fingers as they trail over the

swollen gland in his neck. They stay like that, in a charged yet comfortable silence waiting for his knot to go down while a mix of fluids seeps out between them.

Their third day at the lookout tower feels a lot like dropping acid. At least that's the best comparison Daryl can come up with. Everything feels profound and important. Colours are more vibrant, sounds richer. Touch and sensation hugely amplified.

Everything feels otherworldly, soft light diffusing through the low grey clouds, her frizzy hair with a small braid at one temple, blue eyes, their scents so mingled they have become one. It's hot and damp, they are soaked, sweat pouring off of them both. Their little hut feels like a green house, the windows fogged up from the humidity, condensation beading on the glass.

Their sex is drawn out and trance like. He could have been thrusting into her for hours or minutes, everything is slow, almost lazy. Their orgasms extended, brain melting. It's magnificent, better than any high Daryl's ever had.

Then her fever breaks and he wakes up on their fourth morning in the tower knowing it's over. He's clear headed and energized, completely done rutting. Her pheromones are more crisp and fresh smelling, the sweet musky scent of heat fading.

As much as he enjoyed the heat (really it might be the most enjoyable thing he's ever done) he's deeply relieved to know she's come out of this undamaged. Daryl assumes it stretched on for so long because their day of travel impacted her so deeply. Clearly she was battered by having to leave her nest and trying to resist her heat while they traveled. Seeing no visible impact on her now helps him feel like maybe he made the right choices. Let's him believe he did a good job, was a proper alpha for her. That line of thinking has him trying not to wonder when she'll ask him to bond her again.

Beth wakes up feeling well rested, calm and level headed. When she stretches under the worn quilt her body is sore, the muscles in her thighs and hips tight and achy. A tangible reminder that all of it was real.

She sits up and takes in the small space bathed in golden morning light and promptly falls in love. The cabin is amazing. Quaint and rustic, perfect for two people. The view is breath taking and there is a undeniable sense of safety and security being in a raised tower on a mountain. It's the sort of peaceful that had started to feel out of reach and foolish to even hope for.

The first thing she does is eat breakfast. She is sitting on the foot of the bed, using a steak knife to load a saltine with a little heap of peanut butter. Daryl is leaning against the desk watching her. Everything should be awkward, but somehow it isn't, not even a little bit. That first morning after her heat breaks it's as if there is an unspoken agreement to just not talk about any of it.

"So, have you found anything good?" Using the cracker, Beth gestures to the small space around them.

"Well I ain't actually checked out much other than the bed." He shrugs and his cheeks flush, "Could tell the place was long abandoned, figured we could go through it all together."

It's unspoken that they were both in no condition to properly clear anything when they arrived.

"Guess we got a plan then." Beth agrees.

It turns out the little cabin is more than they could have hoped for. Secure, fully off grid and totally unclaimed. The small kitchen has some basic dishes and utensils, a few mismatched pots and pans, a half full bottle of canola oil, a box of table salt, and a stack of five gallon buckets. The sink is not plumbed, but gravity fed from a suspended water cooler jug (currently empty), one bucket sits below the drain in the lower cupboard to catch any used water. On the counter there is a large metal container that reminds her of the old coffee percolator in the Church basement when she was growing up, Daryl says it's a fancy ceramic water filter system, top of the line.

In the desk drawer they find a forest services binder that details how the cabin was designed to be used. The tower had been manned from April until September of each year. A roster of Rangers would do three weeks in almost total isolation watching for any sign of fire in the surrounding forest before rotating out. The binder has instructions on using and cleaning the wood stove, water collection and purification, and the solar power system. It turns out there are two solar panels on the roof and two batteries and a converter wired in under the platform the bed rests on. The system powers the lights (three inside and two on the deck), a ceiling fan and two power outlets.

They head out to the deck happy to find a stack of cut fire wood and a rain barrel. Under the stairs at the base of the tower is what looks like a large shed on a concrete pad with two doors. When they open the first door they find it's actually a pit toilet and make shift shower. There are a few laminated print outs pinned to the wall. One sign informs them the toilet is designed to be maintenance free, and warns not dispose of any paper or non organic matter in the toilet. Another has instructions for filling the water tank on the outside of the shed that feeds the gravity shower. The last details how water is supposed to be retrieved from the nearby creek using an ATV with a water tank and pump and use of the pulley system for hauling buckets of water and bundles of wood to the top of the tower.

The second door opens on a storage space with a few tools and basic equipment. An axe, shovel, gas powered weed whacker, a few coils of hose and three full Jerry cans of gas. They tramp around and check out the meadow that surrounds the tower. There are a few worn paths, one leading to the creek that cuts through the south east corner of the clearing, one to a fire pit with two benches and a picnic table. They find no sign of the ATV, assuming it was driven down by the last ranger stationed here.

They have lunch sitting on the deck, their feet dangling over the edge, while their shoulders lean forward against the railing. They sit side by side, close but not touching. Their interactions are friendly, but they don't have the ease they shared yesterday. As if it's not clear what boundaries exist between them right now. Beth knows Daryl is waiting to follow her lead, he has made that much clear. Even though it might be easier if Daryl would just tell her

what to do, it is incredibly comforting that he wants to ensure she keeps her agency. Now she just needs to find the courage to ask for what she wants.

After lunch Daryl goes off to hunt and Beth stays back to organize their supplies. It's the first time they have been apart for more than a half hour since before her heat. Being alone is strange but Beth is thankful for the opportunity to dissect everything that has happened in solitude.

Logically Beth knows she should be feeling ashamed right now. The things she did and said, the way she acted. Her entire upbringing focused on how wrong these types of thoughts and desires are. Beth had always expected to find strength in Jesus's sacrifice and use it to control her omega impulses. So it's not surprising she's a little overwhelmed but it is a little shocking that shame has not reared its ugly head.

Maybe she's starting to really believe everything Daryl told her, that this is all natural. Beth thinks he might be the only person who has ever accepted her fully. He sees her designation as an integral part of her, the same way being alpha is a part of his own identity. It feels like she is finally starting to recognize her true self. Able to acknowledge that the strong omega urges she felt during heat are not separate from her rational mind but rather the foundation for it.

It's almost a chicken and the egg conundrum. Beth has always wanted to make her pack happy and comfortable, she's a caretaker, nurturing and domestic, fiercely loyal. Does Beth exhibit omega traits in her personality and demeanor because she's of omega designation, or did her designation settle on omega because she had the necessary traits? Is there even a difference? It doesn't seem like it really matters anymore, it's just who she is, how she is.

Later that night, after their supper of roast rabbit, once they are lying side by side in the dark Beth finds it easier to take action. She wiggles back across the mattress until her back is pressing into Daryl's front. His hand finds her hip, his touch light and tentative. She pulls his arm tight around her while pushing her bum into him. He takes the hint and pushes under her t-shirt groping at her breasts and hips, touching as much skin as he can reach. Eventually she rolls over and kisses him hungrily. Beth can't get enough, slick tongues mixing with lips and teeth and gasping breaths. She keeps kissing him until her lips are raw and puffy, feeling numb from the scratch of his facial hair.

She shimmies out of her panties and t-shirt while he gets rid of his boxers. Then she pulls at him so he's lying over her, his narrow hips cradled in her thighs. It's dark but she can see him clearly in the pale moonlight. He's staring down at her, eyes roaming over her face. His fingers drag down her jaw and grasp her chin.

"Ya sure you wanna keep doing this, Sweetheart?" His voice is low and rough, his pupils blown wide in the dark.

Beth nods frantically. Blinking back the tears she can feel gathering. She doesn't want him to get the wrong idea. She wants this, wants him, so much that it threatens to overwhelm. He studies her intently for a second and then his hand drags down over her throat and between her breasts. He rubs at the soft flesh of her belly before letting his thumbs drop down and massage her pubic mound.

He sits back on his heels and watches as his fingers slowly work into her folds. They skate over her opening, dragging the moisture gathering there up to her clit. Her knees fall open and she reaches out, fingers finding his chest and then following the coarse hair down. She rubs her fingers lightly over the velvety skin on his dick. She's watching him closely and doesn't miss the way he leans into her touch, his breath rushing out in a grunt when she wraps her hand around him tightly.

She tugs him forward. Ankles hooking behind his thighs as she guides him until he's pushing into her. Stretching her perfectly. His thumb is rubbing firm little circles on her clit, it's only a minute or two before she's cumming around him. He doesn't stop thrusting, just rocks back adjusting his angle and hitching her hips up with one hand while the other continues to rub against her.

She cums so many times she loses count. Her thoughts go fuzzy and her limbs are heavy and tingly. His pace never slacks. Sweat coats his chest and his breathing is harsh. His eyes stay locked on the spot where he's sliding in and out of her. It starts to feel like she is about to break apart.

So she begs, "Please, fill me up. Please."

His hips falter and he moves forward to cover her with his body.

Her hands thread into his hair. She pulls him closer, legs wrapped around his waist and pants in his ear.

"Please. I want it."

No longer heated and slick the sharp, stinging sensation of his knot filling knocks the wind out of her. Gasping, she clutches at his shoulders while the rush of endorphins pull her through yet another orgasm. Her nervous system flares as her body opens and makes space for him. Every part of her pulses with a pleasure that borders on numbness.

Beth knows alphas don't always have to knot when they orgasm if they're not in a rut. She'd picked that much up from movies and TV, and she knows alphas mate and marry betas all the time. Although, she had honestly never really been clear on the how of it all. Regardless, she decides it's a good sign, proof that they are compatible. Maybe Daryl is already feeling like her alpha, that he'll want to bond her. She doesn't voice these thoughts, not wanting to disturb the intimate moment. Instead, she just runs her fingers across Daryl's scalp as he falls asleep locked inside her.

Beth is going to ask Daryl to bond her. The question has already almost slipped past her lips a few times, but she's waiting. She's completely sure in her decision. No matter what else may happen in her future she knows Daryl Dixon is meant to be her bond mate. She's waiting so there is no possibility that Daryl will blame her heat. Beth's not going to let some misguided attempt at gallantry have him turning her away. Not again.

In the morning they head out to explore the forest and they just keep not talking about anything big. Neither of them mention the heat, or bonding, or their missing family. Their interactions are far more than friendly now, the boundaries between them redrawn. Daryl's

reaction to her the night before reassuring her and giving her the confidence to act on her feelings. She's tactile and affectionate and every touch she initiates he responds to positively. She doesn't hold back, doesn't even try to, she's hungry for him. Beth's never felt this way about anyone.

They keep the same routine for the next four days. Explore the mountain, hunt, eat, have sex, sleep deeply. First the heat and now this. It won't be possible to go back to just being pack mates, and she wouldn't want to. No matter what his answer is when she asks him to bond this time it will change things between them. She tries not to think that she is waiting to ask so she can enjoy him as her alpha while she has the chance.

Traveling all over the mountain is strenuous out doors work but it's nothing like the journey up to the look out tower was. Their exhaustion, heavy load and her heat sickness combined with the bad weather had made the trek seem monumental. Hiking around the trails and exploring when they're feeling well is fun by comparison. Plus one of the first things they find makes all of their future trips faster and easier.

They followed the logging trail and then found an even smaller dirt road it had lead to a large arched metal building with a roll up shop door. Inside they find a veritable fleet of park service vehicles. There are three pick ups, one small SUV, a dump trailer, and five ATVs one that has a water tank welded onto the rear rack. There is also two large free standing gas tanks outside, one is full the other under half.

They take the ATV with the water pump and one with out. They park them both right up under the tower. They also take one of the pickups and move it to their parking lot with the sedan that has the white cross on the back window. They make sure both gas tanks are full. The SUV they park on the logging road near the tower. They now have lots of options if they ever need to run.

They have been riding the ATVs following the various trails that criss cross the mountain. They have found a few structures to provide temporary shelter for hikers or forest rangers, but nothing substantial. Until they follow a track that winds around to the west face of the mountain and then cuts down into the valley below on their third day exploring. When they break through the tree line they see multiple buildings grouped together in a clearing. Daryl is highly suspicious, his pheromones ripe with agitation and unease. It makes Beth jumpy and nervous, anxious to clear the place and get it over with. After a very tense approach the whole thing ends up being pretty anticlimactic, with the buildings being just as abandoned as the rest of the mountain.

After some searching they figure the compound is an off grid hunting lodge. A spot for rich folks to come enjoy the outdoors without having to sleep rough or get cold and dirty. It seems like construction just finished but it never opened to guests, maybe because of the outbreak or maybe the project just ran out of money. At the front of the property is a locked gate leading out to a rough overgrown driveway. At the back there is a massive solar array and lithium battery bank, two large wood sheds full of chopped wood, a well, and a septic field. The main lodge has 15 rooms with ensuite bathrooms and fireplaces, a commercial kitchen & laundry, a large great room with a huge stone fire place, and storage rooms and office space. There are also 6 small cabins, each with two to three bedrooms, wood stove, and a full bath, two of

them even have kitchens. The final building on the property is a large garage stuffed with tools and building supplies left over from the construction.

There are boxes of flat packed furniture and stacks of plastic wrapped mattresses along the walls in the great room. The kitchen was never stocked with food but it's a huge score in terms of utilities and appliances. Being able to store fresh meat is a game changer. The whole place will be important if they ever reunite with their people. It's an amazing find but Beth is relieved when Daryl does not want to stay there. It's too big and empty. Doesn't feel homey the way it does in their tower.

Deciding not to stay in the lodge is the closest they have come to discussing their next steps. Beth knows they will need more supplies for the winter and they should be searching for other survivors, but she hasn't been able to broach these subjects. Everytime she so much at thinks of the future the idea of bonding slides to the front of her mind and she becomes totally tongue tied. Something in her yearns for that connection, she's not exactly sure what will happen when he bites her but she can't stop imagining that he does. She is nearly certain he will say yes but at the same time she is deeply afraid of him saying no. A fear that builds the longer they avoid taking about it.

They have spent the last few days searching all over the mountain, seeing what they can find. Getting the lay of the land. She is bright and happy, and warm. Always touching him, hugging and kissing him, and she keeps blowing him in the most scenic spots. It seems to happen at least once a day, usually when they stop for lunch. She drops down onto her knees, drapes herself over his lap and looks at him with those big blue eyes then just goes to town on him.

The first time they were sitting on a bench, at a scenic rest stop on the trail. He is surprised when Beth plops down and starts reaching for his belt with a big smile on her face, but he wasn't going to turn her down. They haven't seen anyone living or dead since they arrived here, doesn't seem too risky. If Beth wants to blow him in the warm afternoon sunshine who is he to say no?

After that it just keeps happening. Sometimes more than once a day. Some of his favorite things are being out in nature and Beth sucking his cock. So everything should be amazing but it's eating at him that she hasn't said anything about them bonding. It's starting to feel like she's avoiding any and all serious conversations, he just can't figure out why. She seems to want him, is sweet and nice, they sleep side by side, they fuck and she can't keep her hands off him. What is she waiting for? Has she changed her mind? Is she just bideing her time until she can leave, or find another alpha?

By the time they find the lodge on the third day of exploring he's on edge. Tense and fixated on the idea of biting her. He's too much a pussy to just ask what she wants to do. It's starting to feel like he made a mistake insisting she ask again after her heat was done. No, he knows he did the right thing, he just hates himself for how much he wishes it could have happened.

They search the buildings and find them all truly abandoned. They talk about all the ways this place will help them survive, of how amazing it will be if they find their pack. They even

agree that despite what a great find it is it makes sense to say in the tower while it's just the two of them. What they don't do is talk about the future or make any real plans.

That night when they're back in the tower he sleeps fitfully. He's thirsty and his hip hurts no matter how he lies. He's watching shadows move across the ceiling ready to give up on sleep altogether when he finds himself back in their nest at the funeral home.

It's the very start of Beth's heat. She's in front of him presenting. There is no hesitation, he grabs her by the hair and pulls her back flush against his front. Uses his knees to spread her legs further apart. He sinks his teeth into the gland just below her jaw at the same time that his cock pushes up into her slicked cunt. Her blood floods across his tongue.

He wakes up on his side, curled loosely around Beth, soaked in sweat with his cock so hard it's painful. He drops onto his back rubbing the heels of his palms into his eyes, trying to shake off the haze of his dream state. He feels her shift against him, sitting up and looking down at him. She is fiddling with her bracelets, fingers pulling at the beads nervously. Their eyes connect and anxiety starts bubbling in his gut. Beth looks like she is steeling herself, pulling up all her determination and courage, as though she is about to do something difficult. Her pheromones smell of agitation and worry and in response his blood starts rushing in his ears. The inside of his head is so loud that it takes him a minute to understand what she says when finally speaks.

"If you're not doing anything, how would ya feel about bonding with me today?"

Chapter 4: IV

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Daryl's racing around the small space, a whirlwind of activity. He's pulled his jeans and boots on. Beth is still sitting naked in the bed, the quilt pooling around her hips.

"Daryl? Did ya hear me?"

He doesn't respond. Beth watches him grab his pistol and crossbow, setting them on the counter.

"Is this ya saying no?"

He fills two water bottles, adding them to his pile on the counter, followed by a cardboard box of crackers from the cupboard.

"Isn't four days long enough? I'm over my heat, I know what I want."

He doesn't seem to hear her. He's too busy grabbing supplies and muttering to himself.

"Daryl," she really wishes he would just look at her.

"Sweetheart, ya don't need to convince me," he speaks without looking up from the box he's searching through.

She looks at him skeptically, "This is ya saying yes?"

"I told ya before that I wanted to." He stops and turns to look at her, "that all ya had to do was ask once your heat was done."

"Um...OK. What are ya doing? If you're on board why did ya get up?" She pats the empty space next to her on the bed.

"Wanna make this special, like ya deserve." He's turned back around rifling through the boxes of supplies they have stashed under the desk.

"Not sure what ya think I deserve." She shakes her head and laughs, "other than what I'm asking for."

"Well, I been thinking about what ya said," his hands still, "that how things could have been, if there were never walkers, don't matter because this is how it happens. I was thinking that even with all the bad things going on the world didn't actually end. This is your life, the one and only." He's staring, holding her gaze, "it's important. So I'm gonna do this proper, treat ya right."

"What are you talking about?" her voice is high and squeaky, she feels nervous, unsure of what he means.

"There is something I want to show ya."

"What do you mean? Something ya want to show me?"

"I'm taking you somewhere special before we bond, it's a surprise, Sweetheart!" he laughs.

"Ok!" Beth flings her arms up dramatically, she's giving up.

"That's it? Just ok? Ya ain't got five thousand more questions?"

She shrugs her shoulders, smiling, "Daryl, you're gonna bond me and ya think I deserve a surprise. I'm not gonna argue. Surprise away."

He pops up quickly, striding across the room and then shuffling across the bed on his knees to kiss her. When he pulls back he beams down at her. Tucking a messy strand of hair behind her ear with a smirk.

She barely manages to get dressed. Daryl is going to bond her. Her fingers are shaking, she's flooded with nervous excitement. The gland in her neck feels sore, an achy bump under her skin. Once she's dressed Beth offers her help and Daryl refuses. Beth asks what he's bringing but he just smiles and says he found some things at the lodge that might be nice. Then he kicks her out of the tower.

"Why don't you head down and wait for me, I'm just gonna get a few things ready up here for tonight, then we're good to head out."

"What sorta things?" she asks.

He laughs, "oh, ya know streamers, balloons, fruit punch, all the normal shit people have for celebrations."

"Don't take too long," lingering in the doorway, her voice sounds whiny to her own ears.

Beth wants to make a snarky comment, to be funny and cool, but she's too on edge.

"Impatient little thing ain't ya."

"Daryl, I already waited four whole days."

He pushes her out the door, making a shooin motion with his hands. She shuffles down the stairs and waits by the fire pit, with her mind buzzing. What is even happening? She can't begin to imagine what he's planning. She honestly doesn't know what to expect. Feels like she's floating but also like she may burst into tears. After about 20 agonizing minutes, during which she becomes convinced the anticipation will actually kill her, Daryl comes down with one of the duffle bags and loads her up behind him on the ATV.

Daryl takes one last look around the cabin hoping he's done it right. He's nervous, still not sure what she's going to think. He's never made a nest before. He knows it's not as good as she could make herself, he's hoping it's the thought that counts. Those worries leave him as soon as she's tucked behind him on the four wheeler. He's thought about this constantly for days, but he still can't believe it's happening. She actually asked him to bond with her, and he will do everything he can to make sure she doesn't ever regret that choice.

They roll to a stop on a section of trail they have driven down a bunch of times. He climbs off and moves some branches and all of a sudden there is an overgrown yet visible path that splits off heading downhill. He sees Beth craning her neck to look at a sign post, the same type they have seen marking lots of the trail heads, laid flat on the ground in the bushes.

"Daryl, did ya hide this trail?"

"So what?" he sounds defensive, feeling self conscious and worried this whole idea is getting away from him.

"Just trying to figure out what ya were thinking."

He lets out a deep, noisy breath, "I was thinking I found a cool spot and I wanted to keep it to surprise ya with on a special occasion. That a problem?" He cocks an eyebrow, knowing he's not successful at keeping the agitation off his face.

"Nope," she pops the p. "Not a problem."

"Gonna make fun of me?"

"Daryl, why would I make fun of ya?" she actually sounds a little offended.

"I don't know..." his voice is quiet.

Daryl can't help but think of what Merle would've had to say about all this. None of it would have been positive. He definitely would have called Daryl a pussy. The thought makes his insides squirm, but he also knows that Merle didn't know shit about being a good alpha.

"You wanna be sweet and nice to me. The very last thing I'm going to do is make fun of ya. I'm just trying to wrap my mind around the idea that you've been planning this," her voice is bright just like her smile.

"Ya got no idea." He can't help but grin back at her.

"Oh?" She tilts her head in question.

"Feels like it's all I thought about every fucking day we been here." He quietly adds, "I was starting to think you'd changed your mind."

"Nah, I just wanted ya to know how sure I am. So I waited, as long as I could. Almost asked 100 times before this morning. I was just so worried you might turn me down."

"Sweetheart, I'm not sure I would have had the strength to say no if you had asked again while you were still in the thick of it. Not biting ya is the hardest thing I've ever done."

She leans over from where she is perched on top of the four wheeler to kiss him in the dappled sunlight. Her fingers tug lightly on the hair at the base of his neck before she leans back. She slaps the flat of her hand against the seat in front of her with a huge grin splitting her face.

"Come on now, don't make me wait any longer."

Daryl drives them slowly down a narrow path that winds through dense trees until it breaks into a small clearing. There is a tumble of rocks and below it a pool of water, the water is moving and overflows the pool in a small trickle that heads off downhill through the trees, likely running into one of the many creeks.

Daryl parks on the far side of the clearing, away from the water where there is a picnic table and fire pit. They climb down and Beth takes a minute to look around as she stretches her arms over her head and then bends down and touches her toes. Daryl is unloading the supplies onto the table, as Beth heads over to get a closer look at the water. He knows the moment she realizes what this place is because she audibly gasps.

"This is a hot spring!" she's almost shouting, crouched down at the edge of the pool trailing her fingers in the water.

"Thought it might be nice, if we got to soak in some warm water for the afternoon," he joins her at the edge of the pool, "I found it after your heat broke. When I came out alone. Seems to be about as warm as a hot-tub, little cooler at the far end. Only chest deep or so."

"This is, hands down, the best surprise I've ever gotten. This whole spot is so beautiful." She plops down on her butt and kicks her boots off.

"I'm glad you like it, Sweetheart." He crouches down and grabs her ankle, peeling off her threadbare sock, "I know it's not a spa day with your sister or whatever you would have done..." He stares at her feet, rubbing his thumb over the skin on her ankle, "I want you to feel pampered and relaxed."

They strip down together, and then Daryl steps into the pool first. He reaches out for Beth's hands not wanting her to slip on the wet rocks. They float and soak and splash around. They swim for hours, only emerging for sips of water and nibbles of food, or to sit on the edge and cool down. They kiss a little, and Daryl sucks a few deep coloured marks onto the skin of her chest, but despite being naked and wet the afternoon is playful more than anything else. Daryl is truly relaxed and seeing Beth look so content with her tangled hair and rosy cheeks is making his hindbrain hum with approval.

They take their time with cleaning themselves up. It should be mundane, but they are both aware of how rare it is to feel safe and secure like this. They are not even behind a fence, it's just them outside in the afternoon sunlight. They are so comfortable together now, it doesn't even bother Daryl to have her witness his attempts at hygiene, and it doesn't embarrass him to see hers. Using a little set he found at the lodge they cut their nails and shave some body hair.

Daryl has Beth use the cuticle scissors to trim his beard and moustache. Then she urges him to lay back and float in the water so she can wash his hair. He can't help but groan at the way she rubs her fingers along his scalp to get the lather up.

After Beth is done Daryl decides it's his turn. It takes at least half an hour for him to wash and then detangle it all. Her hair hangs down her back dripping while they start a fire and eat a supper of squirrels they caught the day before. Once they are both full he sits on the top of the picnic table and guides her to the bench between his knees so he can pull her clean damp hair into two braids, one starting above each ear. Then he loops them around her head, crossing them over her forehead and then securing them at the opposite temple with two small twist ties he scrounged from the drawer in the kitchen.

With her golden hair forming a crown Beth's shoulders and throat are fully visible. Daryl can't help but notice how red and puffy the gland on her neck looks, how hot to the touch it is when his hand brushes against it. How she seems to suck in a ragged breath anytime he touches the tender spot. That voice in the back of his head urges him to run his fingers firmly over the gland, to push down hard and see how she reacts. It feels like he barely manages to pull away from her.

Daryl has one last thing he brought along for them. Brand new shirts are a true luxury. There had been a mixed selection in a box in the lodge's office, samples branded with different versions of the places logo. For himself he found a black t-shirt with a large grey logo printed on the back. The one he pulls over Beth's head is v-neck, long sleeved and white with a small logo on the left chest. It's way too big for her frame, the neckline revealing her collar bone and tops of her breasts.

Daryl looks her over and is utterly convinced there isn't a single thing in this entire world that could make her more beautiful. His hindbrain is ramping up and becoming harder to ignore, ready to solidify a bond, so her question catches him off guard.

"Do ya really think bonding me is a special occasion?" her voice is soft and she doesn't look directly at him.

"Beth," baffled that she still doesn't understand how he feels, Daryl drops to his knees and looks up at her, "I have no doubt that this is the most important day of my life."

"Oh..." her voice is breathy and soft.

Beth's eyes flutter, and her breathing speeds up. Her pupils are dilated and she smells so sweet and looks so soft. In response his hindbrain is getting louder, demanding that he not wait any longer.

Reaching out he grabs her hands, stilling her fidgeting fingers and rubbing his thumbs up and down against the inside of her wrists. She steps closer, if he leaned forward he could press his face into the soft curve of her belly. He lifts his chin up holding her gaze, needing her to truly understand his intentions and feelings for her.

"Ya have been in my life and my pack for a long time now, but something changed when we were suddenly alone. At first I was so scared. I was terrified I was going to get ya killed. At

the same time so selfishly glad you were out there with me. I can't even imagine if I'd been alone. All of this feels like so much more than I deserve.

We spent the night in that trunk and ya were so close, pressed right against me. That's when I first knew ya was omega. Fuck, I wasn't even sure ya knew. And then we got drunk and ya fall into heat and my entire world shifted. Sometimes I think I wasn't ever a real alpha until we were together. Something changed in me, you unlocked something. I don't want to go back to ya not being the centre of... of fucking everything. You're the most important thing in this world to me.

I ain't gonna say it all the time, that's not who I am, but I need ya to know how I feel and that it's never gonna change. Ya got my word, this is it for me. Being with ya, is the only thing I need."

After a speech like that Daryl should feel embarrassed and exposed but he's just happy to have finally gotten the words out right.

Beth opens her mouth like she is about to talk, then she sort of shakes her head and drops to her knees wrapping her arms around his neck. She leans in and nuzzles her face into the bend of his neck. She drags her lips across his skin and lightly presses into the shell of his ear.

"Today has been amazing, but it's time ya took me home."

Her breath raises goosebumps across his skin. Daryl pulls back, nodding and raking his eyes over her. He's hard and aching in a way that's getting difficult to ignore.

"You're not wrong," he smirks, "I've seen ya every which way, but I'm ready to get ya down on your hands and knees."

The sun is setting on the ride back. By the time they pull up to the lookout tower it's dark and the air is getting colder. He pulls her off the four wheeler and carries her up the stairs, she's laughing and smiling. He can't help but compare how different everything is, how different it feels than the last time he carried her like this, when she had passed out with heat sickness.

Daryl carries her up the creaking metal stairs like she weighs nothing at all. His fingers are stroking and tickling at whatever skin he can reach. She's giggling and he's breathing against her neck, nipping and kissing at her gland. He balances her in one arm as he opens the door and then he carries her across the threshold before setting her down beside the door in the dark cabin.

"Stay here a second," his voice is laced with excitement, "I just gotta turn these on so you get the full effect."

She hears him rustling with something beside the bed and then the cabin is bathed in a soft warm light. There is a mosquito net hooked into the ceiling and draped down over the bed. Entwined in it and strung over the window frames above the bed are a few strands of white Christmas lights. The large windows reflect the soft light and make everything glow. The

mattress itself is heaped with blankets and pillows. Somehow Daryl has turned their bed into a beautiful, intricate nest bathed in warm golden light. It's so frivolous it takes Beth's breath away. She instantly adores it.

She's still standing by the doorway in awed silence and Daryl is beside the bed toeing his boots off. She can feel him watching her. When he speaks it's a command.

"Come here," he growls.

Her heart starts pounding, her breath hitches, a tingle spreading across her skin at the tone of his voice. Her neck throbs. She wants him to understand what he does to her. How he makes her feel. Letting the urges her hindbrain is sending wash over her, she wants to bare her neck and submit. Needs to feel him looking at her, touching her, to make him satiated and content. So she strips, pulling off her jeans and then the large white shirt and lastly her panties and then she drops to her knees. Holding his gaze, unwavering, the whole time.

"Beth."

His voice is so rough that she can't tell if it's a warning or a plea. The air is full of his scent and heavy with pheromones. Everything within her, and the environment, demanding she comply and satisfy his needs. She drops her palms to the floor, looking up at him through her lashes and then starts to crawl slowly forward.

His mouth falls open, like he can't believe what he's seeing. His pheromones filling her nose with the scent of his arousal. He rubs at his erection through his jeans, his eyes glued to her as she approaches. Once she is right in front of him, her face hovering just above his bare feet, he bends down, grabbing her upper arms and dragging her up against him. Their mouths bash together, his tongue licking into her. His teeth nip against her lips and then he's tossing her onto the bed before she can catch her breath.

He moves quickly, his clothes are gone before she's stopped bouncing. Beside her on his knees, he's moving her, arranging her limbs until she's face down with her chest propped up by a few pillows. He's behind her straddling her thighs, large warm hands pressing into her hips.

"Sweetheart, I am going to take such good care of ya," Daryl's voice is strained, but his fingertips are steady as they move to trail up and down her spine.

"Ya been taking care of me."

"Nah, I haven't even gotten started."

He leans down beside the bed and Beth looks back over her shoulder to see him pull out the half full bottle of canola oil. He pours a generous glug into his cupped palm and then rubs his hands together before pressing them into her back. The oil allowing his hands to slide and rub against her skin. He pushes his thumbs and the tips of his fingers into her muscles. Starts at the back of her neck, works down her spine and over her bum, down each leg and then rubs the arches and toes of both feet.

She's boneless by the time he makes his way back up and rubs at her arms and shoulders before flipping her over onto her back. It feels like he is everywhere, all over and all around her, melding into her. His legs are spread wide over her thighs. Every time he leans forward over her his erection bumps against the puffy skin of her labia. Every little moment of connection is delicious but not nearly enough. Beth finds herself staining against the weight of him. Trying to move her hips and spread her legs.

It's several minutes before she realizes he's scent marking her, bombing her with his intense pheromones while he touches every inch of her with his scent glands. Daryl is precise and intensely focused as he runs the inside of his wrists everywhere he can reach. Paying extra attention to her neck and chest. He takes his time, and every time he's bent down over her he licks and sucks at her neck. Everything else has disappeared, it's like she's not even a person anymore, she has transcended and become the overwhelming feeling of being contained and secure. Her brain seems to short out, there are no thoughts, just the steady, content hum of her hindbrain.

Eventually Daryl shakes her shoulders gently, pulling her out of the trance-like state. When she manages to open her eyes he runs his fingers down the side of her face and grasps her chin. The sting of his finger helping to bring her back to awareness.

"Is this what you want?" He's pressed against her, hips rocking forcefully against her pubic mound, "to be tied to me? Ya totally sure?" he sounds desperate, like she's never heard before.

She tries to say his name but it comes out as a whine. High pitched and wordless.

"Beth, Sweetheart ya gotta say it," his voice shakes, "I need ya to say it."

She rolls her head side to side trying to shake the fog out of her brain. Once she is able to focus she sees him staring at her, eyes wide and more than a little wild and she knows exactly what she needs to say.

"You're already my alpha."

"Is that what ya think?"

"Daryl, I know it. You're my alpha. I'm your omega."

He moves so quickly, lunges at her almost. His lips crash into hers, teeth knocking together with the intensity of his kiss. Then he rolls her back onto her stomach and pushes his front roughly against her. Letting his weight push into her and press her down into the mattress. His lips mouth at her neck and his erection rubs into the flesh of her bum. Eventually he pulls her hips up and back so she's bent forward but sitting in his lap, knees wide on either side of his own.

He hasn't even touched her sex yet but she's so aroused that she's dripping. She can feel it sliding across the tops of his thighs where she is pressed against him. Daryl drapes himself over her back, breathing harshly against her ear. Whispering soothing wordless tones.

Rocking against her wet flesh he slowly pushes his erection between her labia. The blunt head of him just brushing against her swollen clit.

He pulls her up, one arm wrapped around her chest pressing firmly against her collar bone. Both of them are on their knees, her back flush against his chest. Her knees are so wide apart that there is a dull ache in her hips. His free hand is rubbing at her breasts, fingers pinching and rolling her tender nipples. The hard length of him just subtly moving between her wet labia. She can feel him tilting his hips until he's catching the edge of her opening with each shallow thrust.

There is so much tension and anticipation thrumming through her that she feels right on the verge of exploding. His lips latch onto her neck, sucking at the swollen lump. She feels a matching pressure in her pelvis, it's too much sensation, she cannot contain it. The moan she releases is unbelievably loud and guttural. She's never sounded or felt more like an animal.

He sinks his teeth into the gland just below her jaw at the same time that his cock pushes up into her. She feels a pop when his teeth crush the engorged gland and split her skin open. She yelps, jerking away from the pain, but he's already sunken deep into the flesh and moves with her.

The pain flairs and morphs almost instantly. Her body is on fire, pleasure flooding her. Every muscle tensed with the longest most intense orgasm. Sensation seems to radiate out from her sex and her neck at the same time. Pulsing waves that combine and merge, overwhelming everything until she's lost in it.

When she comes back to awareness he's licking at her neck and making soft soothing sounds. She's fully collapsed back against his chest held up by his strong arms.

Slowly she starts to rock and meet his motions. The pressure is building up again, pounding through her veins. Soon he pushes her forward onto all fours and fucks her wildly. She's moving, rocking back and forth perfectly in time with his powerful thrusts. Her eyes happen to catch their reflection in the large window. They are bathed in a glowing golden light, cocooned in a plush nest and it's a shocking contrast to the completely feral look on her mate's face. Teeth bared and jaw clenched. His back is hunched, chin tucked into his chest, eyes glued to the place he moves in and out of her. Beth has never felt as powerful or free, amazed that she can match him even when he's wild, unleashed alpha.

The cabin is filled with the sound of wet flesh slapping loudly mixed with Daryl's harsh pants and Beth's ragged breaths. Then he starts to growl. She seems to recognize the sound on some instinctual level. The deep rumbling noise seeming to push her shoulders down into the mattress. She turns the side of her face into the mattress, raising her hips so he somehow slides even deeper inside her.

One of his hands gasps tightly at her hip, the other cups around the back of her neck. His fingertips press into the tender wound on the side of her throat as he pushes her down into the nest. His pace is frantic and then it stutters and he seems to actually roar, the sound freezing her instantly. Daryl collapses over her back, while deep inside her and his knot explodes, causing her entire body to pulse and shake.

The next thing she's aware of she's on her side surrounded by pillows and covered in soft blankets. Daryl is leaning over her pouring water over the wound on her neck and then wiping it away with a soft cloth.

Beth tries to push up on her forearm and he makes a shushing noise as he pushes her back down. She feels him move down, moving the blankets and wiping the wet cloth between her thighs. Then he's right above her, staring down with wet, tender eyes as he lifts her head and holds a water bottle to her lips.

The next time Beth wakes it is in the dark. Daryl is tucked up right behind her, their legs tangled together and his arm heavy across her waist. She shifts, turning so she's facing him. She watches him sleep for several minutes. He looks younger, so unguarded and vulnerable in sleep. She marvels at the idea that he is her mate. It seems impossible that this powerful alpha belongs to her.

There was a moment in the forest this afternoon when she almost told him she loves him. She's sure she does, in fact she thinks he loves her too. Beth suspects that because of how Daryl grew up that it's not something he'd even think to say. That her saying it would make him uncomfortable, the sort of thing he wouldn't know how to respond to. She's ok with that, it turns out the word isn't something she needs to hear. Not when he made the choice to be tied to her, connected in their very blood. She knows that means more than any word.

Still, she can't help but whisper against his shoulder, "Daryl Dixon, I'm so in love with you."

Somehow, she manages to get out of the bed and tip toe out of the cabin without waking him. She heads down the stairs and uses the bathroom. She's perched on the cold toilet seat when she hears the metal tower shift and somehow knows Daryl is on his way down. When she opens the door Daryl is leaning against the wall outside, waiting. Her body has a physical reaction to the sight of him in the pale moonlight, his chest bare and jeans unbuttoned. A flush spreads over her skin and her heart speeds up, saliva pooling in her mouth. He scoops her up without a word and carries her back up the stairs.

He keeps her tucked against his chest as he leans on the railing. Both of them staring up at the dark sky full of stars.

"This is really nice, but ya know you're going to have to let me walk sometimes," she jokes.

His nose presses into the tender skin of her neck. He huffs out a breath.

"I know, but I just bonded ya and you're still feeling all squishy about it so I figure I can get away with it a few more times."

He carries her back into the cabin. It's glowing like a lantern, him having taken a second to plug the lights back in before heading down to find her. He's proud. She was so happy when she saw the nest he'd built for her. He'll be thinking about the awed look on her face and the force of her pheromones for a long, long time. He did that.

He sets her on her feet and takes a step back to stare. Beth is standing beside the nest covered in just the white shirt and the golden light. The lights are behind her. Illuminating the white cotton and showing her in silhouette. He can't help but think she looks like an angel in a white dress. Heaven sent. There are no details but her form is visible, the curve of her tits and ass, the slender length of her legs. She looks like a painting he would expect to see in some fancy gallery, his mate. Daryl really can't wrap his mind around the idea.

He herds her onto the bed and arranges them on their sides under the blankets. He's curled around her back, running his hand up and down her side. Her breathing is steady but he can tell that she's still awake.

"When are ya gonna bite me, Sweetheart?"

It was a thought that crossed his mind while he was cleaning the wound on her neck. The idea is unshakeable, rooted deep in that primal part of his brain. He needs her teeth in his gland, her mark on his skin.

She rolls over in his arms, pressing her face into his chest.

"Ya would want that?" her voice muffled against him.

"Oh, Sweetheart." he takes a deep breath, then he shifts onto his back, pulling her with him so she drapes over his chest, "I want it so bad."

Daryl pulls at her hips, shifting her until his cock is nuzzled between her lips. She pushes up against his chest and leans forward to kiss him. After a minute she starts to shift against him. Each movement depositing moisture from her cunt into him. Soon he is sliding against her with no resistance. She lifts and teases the tip of him, letting it slide just barely inside of her and gently rocking her hips.

Beth leans forward and he can't help but hiss when her tongue licks against his warm skin. She drops down into his lap. Moaning as she suddenly takes his cock fully inside her. He sits forward, burying his face in her tits. He sucks and bites against her pale skin as she grinds her clit into his pubic bone. Eventually he pulls away from her chest, worried he's going to blow his knot.

"Beth, please..." his voice is breathy, even to his own ears.

He doesn't get a chance to feel embarrassed because she stops moving. Dropping her forehead down against his collar bone and panting. When she pulls back her gaze is intense and he can feel the question in it.

"Please, I want it," he reaches up and presses his fingers into her gland, rubbing gently against the broken skin.

Her eyes are watery but she nods. Reaching her fingers out and tilting his head to the side and exposing the gland in his neck. Beth bends forward, latching onto his neck and sucking. She lifts her hips, pulling up until she's almost off of him and then easing back down and starting

to rock gently in his lap. As her teeth press firmly into his neck he feels her clenching and cumming on his dick. The pressure against his skin starts to lessen and he can't help but beg.

"Please!" it comes out almost a whine.

Suddenly she bites down, hard. Her teeth break his skin, biting into his gland. Daryl has no chance of controlling his reaction. He's cumming before he even realizes it, pulling her down against him as hard as he can, while his knot locks them together. Arms wrapped tight around his shoulder, they shake and shudder together for several moments.

When their orgasms have fully passed she slumps against his chest for a few seconds panting harshly. Suddenly she pops back up right with a panicked look on her face. Hands fluttering awkwardly, her fingers moving lightly over his throat.

"Oh my gosh, did I hurt ya?"

"Nah, Sweetheart," He runs his hands slowly up and down her spine, urging her back down against him, "that was perfect."

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to everyone who has left a comment or kudos on the previous chapters. It means the world to me and absolutely helps me stay motivated to write more.

Chapter 5: V

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When they wake in the grey morning light Beth feels like the same person she has always been, but somehow more. It's as if her boundaries have been adjusted and she takes up a little more space. Her thoughts are louder, feelings seem bigger, her senses and instincts more demanding. Everything that is inside of her, somehow, harder to ignore.

She's hyper aware of Daryl, as if she can feel the weight of his presence pushing on her from across the room. Her eyes find him constantly. She wants to touch, to smell, to taste him, but she wanted to do all of that before so she's not sure their bonding has really changed anything there. Maybe she just wants it all a little more now.

It would be so easy to let the hours after they mate melt seamlessly into days as if they were in a bubble. To fill their time naked in their nest. Except there is a the little voice in the back of Beth's head screaming for her to be useful and helpful. It's an urge she's always felt, but now it seems impossibly loud. Shouting prove your worth. Something Beth is incapable of ignoring.

Beth knows the best way she can ensure her packs safety and comfort is to prepare for the coming winter. Thankfully now, because of this bond she doesn't fully understand, It no longer feels scary or overwhelming to talk about the future. The worry she had felt over asking Daryl to bond her is gone. She finds it surprisingly easy to start the conversation about what they need to ensure their survival, about leaving for a run.

"We need a phone book," Beth announces from the desk where she is looking over the map they brought from the funeral home.

Daryl, who is sitting in the arm chair reading a novel that had been left here by some forest ranger in years past, glances up and raises an eyebrow in question.

"If we're going to do a run just the two of us, and hope it lasts us through the winter, we best have a good plan. Phonebook could help us figure out the best places to check and where they're located."

"The office in the back of the garage has a desk. Lots of papers in it, think maybe there was a phonebook. Definitely a few more maps," Daryl offers.

They go back to the garage to look that afternoon. They find phone books for three counties and loads of maps. Lots of them detailing public lands but also a thorough road atlas for the state of Georgia. It has everything, a section for interstates and highways and then each county and city and town in detail.

They take everything home and Beth starts pouring over the maps and phone books. It becomes clear the first thing they need to do is come up with a list of what they are looking

for. Clothes, they need everything but especially sturdy warm things for the winter. They need books and tools, things that can help them survive long term. The ultimate goal to be self sufficient and not need these sorts of runs.

Food to supplement what they can hunt is the real problem. If they can even find cans it's no guarantee they'll still be good. Flour, sugar, pasta, and rice would also be amazing but are pretty much impossible to find, especially in an amount that would make a real difference. It's not like Daryl and Beth will be venturing into a Costco on their own, places like that are too big and dark and unknown. It would just be asking for trouble they don't need. They might have some luck scavenging houses but it's a temporary fix at best. Really what they need is to move towards producing their own food to supplement what they can forage and hunt.

Beth is tipped back in the desk chair rubbing her hands into her eyes when out of no where she has an idea.

"We need a potato farm."

"What?" Daryl pulls himself upright from where he is sprawled across the bed.

"So, one year my mama moved the garden. Decided it was better on the other side of the farm yard, had my Daddy till a whole new plot, replanted everything. It was such a pain, we all worked at it all summer. But mama was right and the new spot got better light and water and everything grew beautifully.

Anyways, a few years later Daddy was putting up a new shed where the old garden had been. When he dug to put in the foundation we found potatoes. It had been years and they were just growing and rotting away down there. So if we can find a potato farm that's abandoned and not full of walkers we could probably dig up fresh potatoes. They wouldn't be hard to keep over the winter and we could plant what's left of em up here in the spring, we'll just need to till the ground. It's rocky and not ideal but potatoes will grow almost anywhere," she explains.

Daryl's eyes are squinting at her, tilting his head like he's working on some mental math. "We fill the bed of one truck we'd be well good for the winter."

"We'd be set, but I don't think potato farms are just listed in the yellow Pages," she sighs.

"I know where there's one."

"What? How?"

"Merle worked there one summer when he was on parole and needed to keep steady hours for a few months."

"Where?"

"Back south, closer to the prison. It was a big operation, farm and processing. Right on the edge of the Fairfield agricultural area."

He's leaning over her shoulder, pointing on the map Beth has spread over the desk, looking thoughtful.

"Shit, right near here was one of those U-pick orchards. Apples, peaches all that. I remember always seeing the sign on the highway when I had to pick up my brother."

It takes her two days to figure a solid plan. Beth surprises herself getting into the planning. Liking the organization, making decisions. She knows it's not real, but it gives her a sense of control that she has not had in years.

Everything about their circumstances feels new. Different from fleeing like they did at the farm, and the prison and the funeral home. They are leaving this place empty but how they are leaving is different. Packing the little place up tight, intending to come back. They are not running to survive they are going to go and search in an organized manner. They will be returning. It's still terrifying.

The plan is to take two vehicles, park the first just outside Lithia Springs then take the other 30 miles south west to Carrollton where they can check out the farm and orchards and walk back to the first vehicle. They will hit different locations along the route. Their list includes, three farm supply stores, a veterinary office, two independently owned camping outfitters, several thrift stores, and two residential neighborhoods. They are going to make notes of what they find and stash it on-site for later if possible. Once they've scouted the entire route they'll be back at the first vehicle and use it double back picking up their finds. They will finish by picking up the second truck and trying to fill it at the potato farm and orchard. They have a timeline, a list of what they are looking for, contingency plans and meet points in case they get separated. They are as prepared as they can be.

Daryl seen be to agree with all of Beth's planning. He's totally content to let her take the lead. His only contributions are safety concerns he brings up after Beth goes over the details of the plan.

"I'm good with all this but Imma need some things from you, if we're going out there, just the two of us," his voice is firm. "I need ya to always stay where I can see ya."

He's seated on the edge of the desk, his arms folded against his chest like he's bracing for a fight.

"Daryl, how is that practical?"

"I know it ain't practical, but I can't Beth." He closes his eyes and sighs. "What happens if we get separated? If I can't find ya?"

"No privacy at all?"

She understands his instincts are guiding him, but this is a lot to take.

"I'm not chancing a walker or anything else sneaking up on you while you're using the bathroom. When we're successful, ya get back here safe, then ya get to shit alone."

"Really, Daryl?" She can't keep the exasperation out of her voice or off her face.

"Never out of my sight Sweetheart, and I fucking hate to say this, but we can't be foolin' around out there."

He is so intent when he says this, eyes locked onto her own, that she feels the weight of an alpha command slide over her. An alpha command from her mate. The thought makes her light headed for just a moment.

"Ya, ok, whatever ya think," she sounds breathless, her voice barely more than a whisper.

She wants them home safe more than anything. Plus she gets this kind of weird bone deep thrill agreeing to his order. So his order just kind of settles into her subconscious and neither of them realize how deeply it is rooted until much later.

"Never planned this much for a run," he mutters finally breaking their eye contact.

"Still feels like it's not enough. Like I should be doing more," she says.

He stands from the desk muttering, "I thought I was supposed to be the one taking care of ya."

Her eyes narrow and she pushes into his space, reaching up and sliding her finger tips against the scar on his neck.

"Well, Daryl, I thought we were supposed to be a team, to take care of each other."

He folds instantly, hunching over and pushing his face into the crook of her neck.

"It makes me twitchy," he grumbles, "thinking of you out there. Wish we had pack to watch our backs. Or better yet to go do this for us so I could keep ya here."

She rubs his back, and speaks softly into his hair.

"We're gonna be smart, cautious. We're not gonna take risks."

They take so many stupid risks. Daryl would have said his main goal in every situation was always her safety, but in the end it just doesn't seem to matter. At first he actually thinks maybe it won't be so bad, taking Beth out into the world. They are prepared, he has spent hours watching her pour over maps and lists. She's smart and logical, thinking of details and back ups and just in case things that would never have crossed his mind.

There is a little part of him, deep inside, that laughs at the idea that he can do anything to prepare. It whispers that after what happened at the funeral home he should just accept that sometime, one day, the inevitable will happen. Thankfully he's stubborn and Daryl refuses to give any ground to those kind of shitty thoughts. He can't control what happens, but he is deciding he's not gonna live in fear of the future. Like Beth said this is how it happens, he's not fighting it.

After they've been on the road a few hours he's convinced he must be the stupidest dumb fuck who ever lived. It turns out that being away from the safety and security of their hideout with his mate in tow is so much worse than just bad. It's barely been half a day and he's already on edge, agitated and distracted. He hates this shit, it's unbearable.

They left the mountain in the morning light. Beth driving in the other truck just ahead of him on the road. As soon as she started the truck and pulled away the distance between them seems to physically hurt him. Even though he's traveling right behind her, as close as he can while still being safe in case she has to slam on the brakes, it feels like she's miles away, out of reach. Daryl can't help but worry about the separation, over them being so exposed and vulnerable.

They park the first vehicle, pulling it into an overgrown stand of trees to hide it from anyone who might pass by. Then Beth climbs into the cab of his truck. Daryl instantly feels a tiny bit better, less distracted. He yanks on the waist band of her jeans and pulls her across the bench seat. He tucks her under his arm and she presses her face into his shoulder leaning into his side. He pushes his nose into her hair and presses a kiss to her temple before popping the truck into gear and heading back towards the highway.

Due to debris in the road and avoiding walkers it takes forever to drive to the spot where they want to leave the second truck. When they are finally close they pull off the main road and after a little bit of searching are able to find the potato farm that Daryl remembered. They don't go into the farm yard, just check it out using the binoculars from the road. There is no sign that anyone has been living or working here, the place looks sad and empty. The fields untilled, equipment scattered around the yard and the only movement one single walker bouncing against a fence in the northeast corner.

Once the truck is stashed and hidden from view as best they can manage Daryl and Beth pull on their packs and head off on foot. They walk for about two hours and then set up a camp back from the road a ways in a stand of trees. Their first night on the road is uneventful. They eat crackers and fruit cups and don't build a fire. They spilt watch, each one sitting up for half the night while the other sleeps.

Daryl insists that Beth sleep first. She stretches out laying her head on his thigh, his fingers running through her ponytail as he keeps his eyes and ears open to the world around them in the dark. He lets her sleep longer than he should. After he wakes her in the early hours it doesn't take long for him to fall into that trance like state that happens right before sleep.

His head is pillowed on Beth's lap, his breathing even and deep. He's not even sure he's really awake when he hears her whisper.

"I love ya."

Those are not words he's used to hearing. Words no one has said to him since his mama when he was little. He dreams of her, his mama, of being little and home somehow feeling like a safe place. He's asleep and she comes into his room, climbing into the bed and holding him. Except she is Beth and everything is too warm and his limbs are heavy.

He wakes with a gasp. The bright sun pounding onto his face, making his skin hot and sweaty. Beth squirming and stretching her legs underneath his head and him unable to sit up as most of his body presents in pins and needles.

By all accounts their first day of scavenging is successful. They check out two places that were on their list and two more that look promising. They get into a groove. Daryl will break open the door, then they move in together and take out any walkers as quietly as possible. Once Daryl declares the space clear it's pretty much Beth's show. It turns out his mate is hands down the best scavenger he's ever seen. She finds everything, fitting into all sorts of tiny spaces and finding hiding spots he never would have thought of. On top of that she's incredibly organized, every time they leave a spot she finds a moment to scribble in her notebook what they found, where it is hidden, anything they need to know about the place when they come back with the truck.

Through out all of this, in every place they search, Daryl is always wanting to touch her. His palm pressed against the small of her back, grabbing the back of her neck, touching the ends of her hair. Towing her along by joint hands or crowding behind her when she tries to show him anything. It's like he can't stop himself. Every touch is a balm applied directly to his hindbrain, he also knows it's making the wanting her worse. He just can't help himself. He needs to be near her.

The day goes smooth enough, but everything is tedious and exhausting. The longer they are out on the road the more agitated and on edge Daryl is getting, but things don't get really rough until the next afternoon.

The town they are working through must have had a quaint main street at one point in time. Now it stinks like rotting garbage and death. They had been planning on hitting a boutique camping outfitters and a large thrift store that are on the same block. However, there is a group of about thirty walkers milling around in the street outside. They watch from a roof a block over hoping the dead might move on. After almost forty five minutes they call it and admit they just need to skip these places.

They see an old fashioned looking movie theatre about three blocks up on the main street, the marquee says Palace Royal in peeling black and red paint. There are no geeks hanging around outside and it looks as abandoned as the rest of the town. Likely a quick in and out. They decide to check it out. It could be a decent consolation prize if they can find anything left in the concession.

They get through the front doors with no issue. Daryl props one open with a large rock. The problems start once they are inside, he's following Beth as his eyes try to adjust to the darkness with the bright light pouring in behind them. First he smells her surprise and fear as he is bombarded by her pheromones and then he hears them. The low moan of several dead who are just standing spread around in the foyer and open area in front of the concession. The noise of their arrival has roused the walkers, some already moving between them and the door. They stop and slowly back away as quietly as they can, slipping along the wall until Beth is able to pull open a door. Daryl pushes her in and piles in after her pulling the door closed behind him and keeping his hand clutched around the handle.

She flicks on a flash light, shielding the bulb with her palm and barely illuminating the tiny space. Her back is against a cinderblock wall, with a pile of mop handles jamming into one side and metal shelves full of cleaning supplies pressing on the other. He is facing her with their feet entwined, the space so small they are pressed against each other. After a few seconds she flicks the light off, content that they are alone in the space. They listen to the sounds of dead moving on the other side of the door for almost two hours.

By the time the noise starts to slow Beth is leaning back on the wall and Daryl is resting his bow on one of the shelves. With no room to turn around or sit down they are both sore and tired. Beth is finally able to relax a little, the sour notes fading from her scent. Daryl can't help but lean forward and nuzzle into the curve of her neck. Her scent sweetens further as he pushes his whole face into her. Her fingers are rubbing against his shoulders, her head falling to the side exposing her throat to him. It's pure instinct that has him pushing his dick against her hip at the same moment his mouth latches onto her bond mark.

She gasps and then goes completely still. Her pheromones instantly go flat in a way he can't identify. He pulls as far back as he can and starts to ask if she's ok when Beth reaches past him and grabs the door handle. They sort of fall out of the closet and Daryl only just manages to grab his bow and stay on his feet. A spark of anger flares in him, what the actual fuck. He pushes past her with his bow raised.

"Come on now, if we're going you best move yer ass!" He hollers as he takes down two walkers stumbling towards them and storms out into the dusk light.

After that they move in tense silence. Beth trailing a few paces behind him. It takes them a few hours and any daylight is fully gone by the time they make it to the edge of town and find a place to spend the night. Daryl picks a little building that only has one small window in the front. It's an insurance agency, there is a sign on the door announcing the business as 'closed until further notice'.

Beth has her face pressed against the glass of the window, hand cupped around her eyes trying to see into the darkness. He's annoyed and exhausted and hungry and it's fucking pitch black out so it's not like she can see fuck all. So he shoulders past her muttering about wasting time and being in the way. She jumps away from the window with a little squeak and he feels like a bit of dick but manages to hang onto his anger and push the feeling down.

Once he has the door cracked he herds her in and uses his flashlight to check around. It's empty, no dead or living, only them. She follows his light away from the window and into the back of the business. They are in what was once a meeting room, Daryl is ripping open all the cupboard doors and digging through everything inside, only finding paper.

She's standing in front of the long table. Silent, picking at her bracelets. He takes a breath, trying to get himself under control but as soon as he opens his mouth he's angry all over again.

"What the fuck was that Beth? Ya trying to get us killed?"

She's staring at the floor, blinking rapidly. She opens her mouth and it sort of flops around for a second.

"I didn't... I just couldn't..." her voice is cracking.

He can't fucking deal with this. Why did he think they could do this?

"Ya gonna cry now?" He shouts and stomps towards the door, intending to slam it and storm off.

"Daryl," her voice is high pitched, wounded.

It's a plea, and it stops him in his tracks. His anger evaporates at the sound of panic in her voice. He looks at her, really looks at her, maybe for the first time since they got out of the theatre. This isn't just a bad day or fallout from a stupid choice made on a run. He moves towards her and she takes a step backwards, bumping into the table. The room is filled with her pheromones, everything reeking of distress and fear. It hits him like a punch to the gut, the realization that something is wrong with his mate.

"What's happening? Beth..."

She's crying, snot and tears pouring down her face. Her arms are wrapped around her middle, she's curling in on herself. Trying to be as small as possible.

He steps towards her again and she slides back along the edge of the table trying to keep space between them. He doesn't waste time with hurt feelings, just moves quick and cuts her off. He uses his height to lean over her and cages her in against the table with his arms.

"Sweetheart," he works to keep his voice soft and his eyes down, feeling just how on edge she is, "ya need to tell me what's going on."

She shakes her head, avoiding his gaze staring at her feet.

"Sweetheart, please."

He runs his hand up her arm, dragging his fingers across her shoulder and then pressing them into the bond mark on the side of her neck. Her breath catches and her whole body shifts forwards, her face pressing into him.

"I can't help ya, if ya won't talk to me."

Finally she starts to mumble. Her voice muffled by his chest. At first he can only catch every couple of words

"... hard... didn't know - want."

He tilts her chin up.

"Come on, now."

"It's all I been thinking about. Ya said we couldn't, it was so difficult but I was managing. Then we were in that closet and there was this pressure in my head, I couldn't think." She

draws in a shaky breath and finally looks at him. "Like the alpha command took over. I had to leave."

"Alpha command?" Daryl questions, having no idea what she's talking about.

"No fooling around on the road," her voice sounds hollow.

"Nah that wasn't no command," he laughs, shaking his head.

He feels like a piece of shit once he registers the expression on her face.

"Was it?" He questions.

"It most definitely was." Her big wet eyes are locked on him now.

"Ohhhh shit."

This is all a huge mistake. He never intended for that be an actual command. Somehow he thought it would be harder, that he would have to be far more purposeful to have an order actually bind her like this. It would be so easy to really fuck her up with a thoughtless command. It's absolutely terrifying.

He's been teasing, touching and pushing on her just getting what he could while trying to stick to this rule he made but kind of always assuming that at some point they were going to break it. He thought it was fun, a bit of relief to the anxiety of being out here. He hadn't meant to be torturing her. Pushing her to her very limit in the worst possible environments. He tries not to think about how much worse this could have been.

He has her cornered against the table but things can't stay like this. It feels like he's losing his fucking mind. This unintentional command cannot stand. He's sniffing at her hair and neck. Touching his wrists against her skin wherever he can, scenting her. Trying to figure out the best way to reverse this.

He drops his hands to her hips, holding her firmly. Talking with his lips right against the shell of her ear. Asking her to relax, to let him touch her. She's afraid, tense and rigid but he can feel her shiver with want each time he speaks.

"Ya said we couldn't," she whines, frustrated.

"But ya want to?"

"I...Ugh," Beth trails off into a moan.

His thumbs find the skin just above the waist band of her pants. Rubbing soothing circles and constantly moving, searching for more soft skin.

"Ya did so good. Just like I asked." He works to make his voice smooth. "Yer all done now. Ya listened so good, Sweetheart."

He's nipping at her throat. He pushes her jeans and panties down in one motion, hooking his fingers into her boots and pulling everything off and dumping it behind them in a heap on the floor. He grabs her by the waist and pops her up, bare bottom on the table. Her knees are pressed tight together.

It's the first time he has to work for it. To be close to her. She tries to resist him, like something in her still needs to obey his previous command. It bothers him, but excites him too. It's also the first time he tries to purposefully use his alpha influence over her.

"Please Beth. I need ya," he begs with his lips pressed right against her mark.

Her knees fall open, the muscles in her thighs relaxing slightly.

"Good girl."

He takes his time. Rubbing all over her thighs and pubic mound for a long time before he gently pulls her labia apart, letting his fingers dip in against her damp flesh. Her legs relax further. She's getting wet, starts as a slight dampness that lets his fingers glide smoothly between her lips. When he runs his fingers along the opening to her vagina there is more, seeping out of her. By the time he works his thick fingers inside her, rubbing at the walls of her passage, she's soaked. The stale air heavy with the tangy scent of her arousal and slick.

She's sitting on the edge of the table, he's standing between her spread knees. Her head has dropped forward against his chest. She's making these little hiccupy moaning sounds. Quiet but guttural and seeming to force their way out of her. Beth's noises fuel him, his need for her ramping up with the evidence of what he's doing to her.

Eventually Daryl gets himself out of his pants, pushing them low on his hips. She's totally incoherent, head lolling, little gasping noises tumbling out every time he pushes the pad of his finger against her pulsing clit. He pulls her forward to the very edge of the table. Pumping his cock in his fisted hand, lining himself up with her. He's already leaking from the tip, he's so fucking eager to get inside her again.

Pushing her knees wide, he slowly feeds his cock into her. The wet of her cunt seeming to suck him in until they're tight together and her legs wrap around his hips. When he bottoms out, as deep as he can get into her, she collapses back onto the table top. His fingers continue to rub at her clit as his cock moves inside her. Beth's entire body seems to contract, clutching at him as she cums around him. He's so hard it borders on painful, the heat inside her seems scorching after days going without.

He pulls out, needing a second, wanting to make this last. Daryl leans over her staring at her laid out and rubbing his cock. Then he fumbles at her chest, pushing her shirt up and off and pulling her stretchy sports bra down so he can suck at her perfect little titties. She whimpers pitifully and her hands paw at his shoulders, her legs squirming, thighs rubbing together.

Once each nipple is a hard pink point, soaked in his spit, he stands upright. Large hands grabs her by the waist, arms straining as he lifts her, flipping her over. She gasps, her tits now pressed into the cool surface of the table. Beth is up on her tip toes and bent in half, her hips

angling forward pushing her pussy up and presenting it to him. his hands heavy on her thigh spreading her even further apart.

He slides into her with no resistance. Pouring every frustration he's felt over the past few days into her cunt. His hips stutter erratically, no rhythm at all as he fucks her from behind. The table moves across the floor. A high pitched screech each time it advances across the linoleum. She cums again and again until she's just wailing, tensing all her muscles and trying to almost crawl away from him across the table.

He works to hold her in place, one hand on her hip the other grasping the back of her neck. Keeping her tight against him while she shakes and bucks. Daryl slams his eyes closed, overwhelmed by sensation as he cums. Pressing himself as deep inside her as he can get while his hindbrain seems to pulse. His knot swelling and locking into her while every muscle in his body strains. When the pressure and static clears and he's able to form coherent thought again he finds himself draped over her back, panting into her neck.

Eventually he pulls her upright with him, settling them back into a rolling office chair that had been tucked into the table. He fiddles with the chair, pulling on a knob that lets them tilt back. Pressing his heels into the floor he gently rocks them. Tilting back and then forwards. His hands rub at her belly, and press lightly into the muscles of her thighs while they wait for his knot to go down.

"Yer such a good girl," he tells her in a quiet whisper.

His finger tips trail up her ribs, his hands cupping her breasts. He pinches and rubs at her tight nipples. Kissing her neck and sucking on her mark, he feels her getting wet again.

"Such a good mate."

By the time his knot subsides he's already hard again. He doesn't even pull out. Just leans back in the chair, her legs bracketing the outside of his own. Her feet don't reach the ground in this position so he holds her by the waist and sort of bounces her in his lap.

"Fuck, ya feel so good Sweetheart."

The wet sound of flesh smacking fills the room. His thighs are straining, knees aching as he pushes up on the balls of his feet lifting his hips and pelvis, pumping up into her.

Beth is moaning lowly, getting wetter with every thrust but, at the same time, almost limp in his lap. He pops two of his fingers into his mouth, soaking them, then he snakes his arm around her middle and uses his fingers to rub hard at her clit. Her cunt clutches around him, tighter and tighter while her limbs twitch.

"Fuck fuck fuck," he mutters.

His fingers claw at her thighs, holding her open and pulling her down as he blows his knot for the second time. Everything in Beth seems to suddenly release, like a puppet with its strings cut. Blonde hair in his face as her head hangs limply back against his shoulder.

Daryl uses his discarded shirt to sort of mop half assedly at the mess of fluids seeping out between them. He drops the shirt and runs his finger through the slippery mix of the two of them. He runs the same finger up her chest, rubbing it into the smooth skin stretching over her collar bone. He does it again and again. Painting her skin with them. Covering her in his scent.

Then he brings it to his lips. Tentative at first, then eager, hungry for the taste of them together. He makes a conscious effort not to over think his actions, not to question his instincts. They are a mated now and they are going to have to act like it, even out here.

If nothing else today has made it clear that not fucking isn't really an option for them. Now the question is how to be smart and careful about it. Sitting there in the dark, with his mate passed out in his lap Daryl makes a list: only inside, only rooms with no windows and closed doors, only after he's taken the time to clear the space properly, be quiet, be quick.

After that he fucks her at least once a day. Daryl knows it's the one thing that can help them both stay calm and level. Before he would go months without anything or anyone touching his dick and hardly notice. Since Beth's heat it's as if a switch was flicked inside him, going days without touching her seems impossible. At least he has the decency to feel guilty about it. About not being able to stick to the rule he had made, over fucking her up with an alpha command.

That same guilt flares hot and thick in his chest every time he catches her staring at her mark. It's like she can't stop looking for it. Searching out her reflection in every shiny surface they pass. Always a sweet smile on her face as she runs her along the raised scar absent mindedly.

She is precious to him and he tries to be safe. He honestly does, but it seems like for every time they manage to stick to his little list of rules there is another time where they do something incredibly dangerous. He's ashamed to admit just how excited it gets him. Wouldn't have ever said he got off on being stupid, but here they are.

She's just so warm and sweet smelling, soft and also smart and quick. Daryl always wants her. There is nothing about her he doesn't want. He can't help himself, his hindbrain is so loud, so demanding. He wants to be safe but sometimes he just can't help himself.

The worst offence happens when they've been on the road eight days. They are walking down a street in a place so small it can't really be considered a town when Beth stops suddenly. It takes him a second to figure out what she's staring at.

"Didn't know those things still existed. I think I only ever saw them in movies," she almost sounds confused.

It's a phone booth, tucked up close to the front wall of a tiny post office. Glass with a few panels of metal and blue plastic at the bottom. The big black box of a phone attached to the back wall and underneath a little metal shelf with a phone book still chained to it.

"Don't say shit like that. Make me feel like a pervert yer so young," he mumbles putting his hand on the small of her back, trying to keep her moving forward.

"Ha!" She whips her head around and narrows her eyes at him. "Ya have stuck your nose all the way up my butt crack and rubbed your stuff into my skin like it was lotion, but my age is the thing makes ya feel like perv?"

"Stuff?" He taunts.

"Cum," she whispers the word angrily, eyes darting around as if she's scared someone will hear her.

After that Daryl honestly can't explain how it happens but he's backing her into the glass booth and they are kissing, his tongue pushing into her mouth. Then he's leaning down biting at her titties through her shirt.

He peels her shirt up, sucking harshly at the pale flesh. He leaves bright red marks that he knows will become deep dark bruises on her breasts. He must be a dumb fuck, taking a stupid amount of time just to make something he thinks is pretty. He keeps working at her, sucking even when she winces. Only stopping when his knees are unable to keep crouching.

He stands up and kicks the door closed. Watching as she unbuttons her pants and shimmies them down her hips.

"We doing this?" He licks his lips.

"Guess we are." Her smile is dazzling.

He steps up against her and she wraps her arms around his shoulders, pressing wet open mouthed kisses against his bond mark. His hands grabbing at her bare hips, grinding his cock against the seam of his jeans and her pubic bone.

"I need yer fingers in me," Beth's voice is demanding, bratty.

His hand instantly moving to cup her, rubbing against her labia and feeling her pubic hair with the pads of his fingers. Pinching and tugging at the coarse curls before working his fingers into her. She grinds herself against the heel of his palm. Riding his hand, as she grabs at his shoulders. The smell of her arousal filling the small space.

Her whole body jerks, all of Beth's muscles tightening as she cums. He keeps going, pushing her over the edge again. Then she pushes on his forearm pulling him out of her cunt with a sweet sucking noise. She pulls her pants back up her hips and then starts working on his belt and buttons. Shifting him so his back is against the sidewall of the booth as she drops down to her knees.

"Jesus Christ," he whispers in awe.

Daryl watches intently as she pulls his cock out of his pants. Beth looks feral. Her hair is messy and seems to glow around her in the bright sunlight. Tits out, the bright marks he left so vivid against her pale skin. A wide smile splitting her face as her hand wraps around him.

He pants as she leans in and licks at the head of his cock. Beth holds the base with one hand and cups his balls with the other, then sucks him into her mouth. It's so warm and wet, feels incredible. His head thunks against the glass and he works to keep himself under control, wanting to enjoy this.

He sees a lone walker come stumbling around the corner. There is only the one so he watches but doesn't say anything. Out of the corner of his eye he watches it slowly approach. All the while Beth is drooling, working him deeper and deeper down her throat. The walker bumps against the glass and she jumps. His hand is firm on the back of her neck, directing her back to the task at hand.

"Don't stop."

He's rocking forward fucking into her mouth. He's not sure anyone should be able to smile when their mouth is absolutely stuffed full of cock, but of course she manages. The walker makes a horrifying gurgling moan and his rhythm falters. He might be done, all of this is too much. The next moment Beth surges forward even further, his cock bashing into the back of her throat. She makes a choking slurping sound around him and he's back.

He pushes out his leg bracing it against the door and begs her not to stop.

"Please, please. God, Beth, don't stop!"

Daryl is holding the sides of her head. Thrusting down her throat when he cums. Beth only pulls back when his knot starts to rise. He delights in letting it rip everywhere. It's on her tits and in her hair and across her face and splattered across the dirty glass.

She's looking up at him with soft eyes and a big smile. Fingers dragging through the mess on her chest and then slipping into her mouth.

"Yer far too proud of yourself Sweetheart," he mutters as he grabs his knife.

Beth laughs and he leans forward over her. Cracking open the glass door just wide enough to stab his knife through the walkers rotting skull. It falls in a silent heap against the glass and then Daryl helps his mate back to her feet.

They have been searching a residential neighbourhood. They are moving anything worth coming back for into the pool shed of one house on the edge of the subdivision. Getting everything organized so it will be ready to grab when they came back with their truck.

Daryl is mostly just watching Beth. She's pretty sure he's not even looking for supplies. She thinks he's just trying to find a place secure enough that he can throw a quick knot into her. It doesn't bother her, she wants it just as much, every time. She thinks it's another way they are linked together now, a manifestation of how their bond connects them. As if they are two sides of the same coin.

Any thoughts about their bond vanish when they stumble onto three fresh dead bodies. It looks like one had turned and bitten the other two. The two bitten were shot by someone else before they turned and the walker put down.

They are in the living room of a house that is completely trashed. Everything is shot up and the whole place smells like it was used as a bathroom. Daryl is instantly on edge. His pheromones suspicious and worried. They've run into lots of dead but no signs of live humans like this yet. This whole scene makes Beth pretty sure she doesn't want to meet these people.

Daryl hurries Beth out of the house and guides her out of the neighbourhood back towards the road they had just been on earlier in the day. He's unsettled and she doesn't blame him. It felt like they were the last people in the world and this is a harsh reminder of how not true that is.

After a few minutes of waking Daryl stops and looks back at the subdivision. He stalks back and forth across the road, rubbing his hand over his face. Beth can guess what he's thinking and he's not wrong. This is too risky now.

"Daryl."

He stops pacing turning to listen to her.

"I think we should wrap this up early. Just cut over back to the truck and pick up what we have found so far," she suggests.

"We could get more, there were places you still wanted to hit," he counters, but it doesn't sound like he really means it.

"It's it worth it? With people like that around here?"

"Nah, it's not." He shakes his head.

She nods and digs out the map. They plan a new route. Hopefully they will be at the truck by the following evening.

They are making good time, moving quickly when something catches Daryl's eyes at a railway crossing. Everything is different in one instant. He goes eerily still squinting down at the dirt, then after a few seconds he turns heading along parallel to the tracks. He's in a deep crouch, his entire body tense. She watches his focus narrow down to just the trail in front of him. She follows along, waiting several minutes before she taps his shoulder questioningly.

He points to one set of prints, "that's Rick," then to another smaller set, "that's Carl, and I'm pretty sure these are Michonne."

Beth has to steady herself against his shoulder she's so surprised by his response.

"That's good, right?" She questions, the serious tone of his voice worrying her.

He points out several more foot prints.

"These fellas I don't know. The way their prints go right over the others, I would guess they are following, or chasing our people."

"That's bad." Her voice is brittle, the gravity of the situation becoming clear to her.

Daryl straightens up and pulls her into his side. His arms wrapping around her shoulders.

"What do you think we should do?" He speaks quietly, "Beth, I can't... This could be real dangerous."

Beth understands his worry, but this is their pack.

"I think we best hustle if we're gonna catch up." She decides for them.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to Arabianbaby53 for being the best cheerleader and keeping me motivated to write more. She even made an amazing comic based on one of the scenes from the first part of this story.

[I'll catch fire and burn fanart](#)

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